



CSO Partnership 
for Development Effectiveness

A DECADE OF CSO SOLIDARITY
ON EDC ADVOCACY AND PRACTICE



SPOTLIGHT ON CIVIL SOCIETY ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

CSO REPORTS FOR THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP'S
FOURTH MONITORING ROUND 2023-2026



Spotlight on Civil Society Enabling Environment CSO Reports for the Global Partnership's Fourth Monitoring Round 2023-2026

Published by:



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This report would not have been possible without the guidance of CPDE and the country focal members who contributed their case studies.

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August 2024



This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Commission.

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Spotlight on Civil Society Enabling Environment

CSO Reports for the Global Partnership's
Fourth Monitoring Round 2023-2026



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Executive Summary

This report presents a collection and synthesis of country reports submitted by the **CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE)** focal points from civil society in eight countries. These reports form part of CPDE's engagement with the **Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation's (GPEDC) Fourth Monitoring Round or 4MR**.

The country reports in this collection come from the following: Indonesia, Philippines, Honduras, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Nepal. These represent preliminary engagements with the data collection phase in the country-level 4MR process.

The main objective of the GPEDC's 4MR is to track stakeholders' progress in delivering commitments to the four development effectiveness principles contained in the Busan Principles: developing countries' ownership of development priorities, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability to each other. These principles are seen as crucial to attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For the 4MR, the development effectiveness principles are measured by four dimensions and their corresponding components. These dimensions are: (1) whole-of-society, (2) state or status and use of country systems, (3) transparency, and (4) leaving no one behind.

The country reports in this collection focus on CSO enabling environment, a component of the whole-of-society dimension of the 4MR, even as they contain information about other components and dimensions of the 4MR Framework.

Majority of the countries that have country reports in this collection are lower middle income countries, have repressed civic spaces, are considered partly free with regard to human rights and freedoms, and receive USD 1.6 billion or lower in development cooperation financing annually.

The themes that emerge from the content analysis and synthesis of the country reports are taken as indicative of trends in CSO enabling environment and other aspects of development cooperation in partner countries, and are compared with development effectiveness principles and previous and recent related reports by the GPEDC, CPDE and other international platforms.

With regard to CSO enabling environment, country reports show that:

- **Partner country engagement.** While partner countries engage with CSOs in creating national development strategies, these engagements are beset with challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization, as well as lack of relevant information.
- **CSO development effectiveness.** Majority of CSOs have adopted policies that are based on international standards and enhance their transparency and accountability, but due to lack of capacity, evidence about how these policies are translated into practice is weak.

- **Development partner support.** Except for including CSO enabling environment in their engagements with partner countries, there is little evidence that DPs worked to enhance CSO enabling environment.

- **Legal and regulatory frameworks.** Most countries have legal and regulatory frameworks that safeguard CSO enabling environment, but these face violations and problems in implementation.

Findings from the country reports in this collection largely indicate continuity with the findings on CSO enabling environment made by the 3MR in 2018, as reflected by both the [GPEDC](#) and [CPDE](#) reports on the monitoring round.

With regard to private sector engagement (PSE) for development cooperation, another component of the whole-of-society dimension, findings from the minority of country reports that discussed PSE evince lack of inclusive CSO engagement on PSE by both partner countries and DPs. They also show lack of inclusion of trade unions and CSOs in partner country engagements on PSE. These findings also indicate continuity with the 3MR findings on the topic.

With regard to development effectiveness principles, country reports in this collection provide evidence, of varying degrees of strength, that basic actions mandated by the Busan Principles, enjoy buy-in by partner countries, DPs and CSOs. Measured against the entirety of the Busan Principles and the GPEDC and CPDE 3MR reports, however, significant challenges persist and hinder progress in the effective development cooperation agenda – which has implications for the sustainable development agenda itself.

As the 4MR is a source of information for tracking progress in a few Sustainable Development Goals, country reports in this collection suggest continuity with findings of the GPEDC 3MR report:

- SDG Indicator 17.16.1: a few partner countries engage in inclusive, transparent, and accountable multi-stakeholder partnerships
- SDG Indicator 17.15.1: a few DPs use country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by aligning with partner country priorities
- SDG Indicator 5.c.1: a few countries have comprehensive tracking systems in place and make gender budget allocations available publicly.

This report recommends taking the 4MR as an opportunity to renew commitment to development cooperation and the sustainable development agenda, and taking decisive action to create an enabling environment for CSOs on the part of partner countries (creating inclusive, equitable and institutionalized engagement and partnerships), DPs (enabling developing country CSOs' financial independence, sustainability and local ownership) and CSOs (enhancing capacity to make demonstrable progress in development effectiveness).

INTRODUCTION

Towards Effective Civil Society Engagement with the Global Partnership's Fourth Monitoring Round

This report presents a collection and synthesis of country reports submitted by the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) focal points from civil society in eight countries. These country reports are initial contributions to the respective countries' participation in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation's (GPEDC) Fourth Monitoring Round or 4MR, which started in 2023 and will end in 2026.

The country reports in this collection are outputs of the CPDE's December 2023 training on CSO engagement with the 4MR. The training, the country reports that follow and the publication of this collection are all efforts by the CPDE and the participating CSOs to jumpstart and catalyze civil society's effective engagement with the 4MR, which has just started and is, as of publication, still ongoing.

This Introduction presents (1) a short background of the GPEDC and its 4MR, (2) a short walk-through of the 4MR process and framework, (3) CSO framework of engagement with the GPEDC's 4MR according to the CPDE, (4) this collection's approach to the country reports and brief profiles of the countries which the reports in this collection come from, and (5) the plan of this report.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP AND ITS 4TH MONITORING ROUND

In 2011, 163 countries gathered in Busan, South Korea to advance development cooperation and development efforts towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals (the precursor to the Sustainable Development Goals). There, they created the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), a multi-stakeholder platform, and brought together the principles of effective development cooperation in what has been called the Busan Principles.

In response, 50 leaders and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) around the world gathered in Nairobi, Kenya in 2012 to affirm their commitment to the Busan Principles and merge Better Aid and Open Forum, civil society platforms for development cooperation, into the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). Since then, the CPDE has worked alongside the GPEDC as the civil society platform for effective development cooperation.

To track commitments to effective development cooperation made by partner country governments, development partners (DPs), CSOs, the private sector and other development actors, the GPEDC has created its instrument – the monitoring rounds. The GPEDC's monitoring exercise has also become an official source of information for three SDG targets:

- SDG 17.15, about respecting each country's policy space and leadership
- SDG 17.16, about multi-stakeholder partnerships for development
- SDG 5.c, about adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

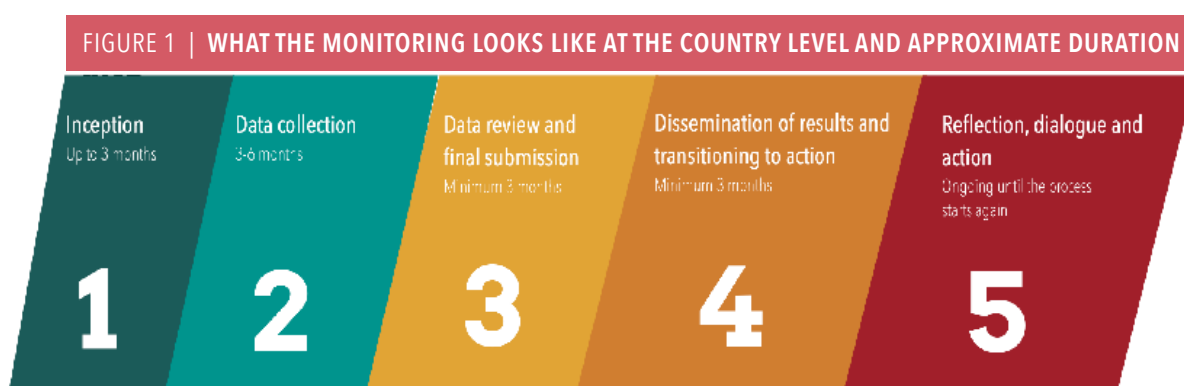
SDG 17 is seen as crucial to attaining other SDGs in the 2030 Agenda, while SDG 5 embodies the ideal of gender equality and ending discrimination, violence and other harmful practices towards women and girls.

Since 2011, the GPEDC has held three monitoring rounds, in which 99 partner country governments have participated. These monitoring rounds took place in 2014, 2016 and 2018. The CPDE has actively participated in these monitoring exercises as the CSO platform for effective development cooperation.

Between 2020 and 2022, a comprehensive review and reform of the monitoring exercise was carried out and resulted in a revised monitoring process and framework. The new monitoring process and framework was endorsed by the 3rd Global Partnership High-Level Meeting, or Effective Development Co-operation Summit, in 2022. The summit also launched the GPEDC's fourth monitoring round (4MR), taking place from 2023 until 2026 and will culminate in the next GPEDC High Level Meeting.

4MR PROCESS AND FRAMEWORK

In general, the 4MR process starts with multi-stakeholder “participation, data collection and dissemination of results” which will then lead to “strategic reflection, dialogue and action for more effective development co-operation” (GPEDC 2023, 6). At the national level, the process is led by partner country governments. **Figure 1** illustrates this process and provides general guidelines to partner countries who can then create a roadmap tailored to their conditions and needs.



(Source: GPEDC 2023, 6)

At the global level, however, the monitoring process happens in four-year cycles, which are called Global Rolling Rounds that each culminates in a High-Level Meeting.

The main objective of the GPEDC's monitoring exercise is to track stakeholders' progress in delivering commitments to the four development effectiveness principles that are stated by the Busan Principles:

- developing countries' ownership of development priorities
- focus on results
- inclusive development partnerships
- transparency and accountability to each other

The GPEDC, together with the CPDE, sees these principles as essential to promoting effective partnerships for development cooperation, which is in turn essential to attaining the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For the 4MR, these development effectiveness principles are measured by four dimensions and their corresponding components. These dimensions are: (1) whole-of-society, (2) state or status and use of country systems, (3) transparency, and (4) leaving no one behind. **Table 1** shows the four dimensions and their corresponding components.

TABLE 1 THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING FRAMEWORK: A SNAPSHOT				
Collective accountability	PRINCIPLES	DIMENSION	COMPONENT	SDG 17.16.1
	Country ownership - Focus on results - Inclusive partnerships - Transparency and mutual accountability	Whole-of-society	Engagement and dialogue	
			Parliamentary oversight	
			Enabling environment for civil society organizations (CSOs)	
			Private sector engagement in development co-operation [Kampala Principles Assessment]	
		State and use of country systems	Planning	
			Respect country's policy space - SDG 17.15.1	
			Public financial management	
			National budget	
			Gender budgeting - SDG 5.c.1	
			Accountability mechanisms	
			Information management	
			Procurement	
		Transparency	Countries' action	
			Development partners' action	
		Leaving no one behind	Consultation	
			Targets and results	
			Data and statistics	

(Source: GPEDC 2023, 7)

The 4MR framework promotes collective accountability among various stakeholders for the four dimensions, as accountability for their actions and behaviors are “interwoven across the framework” (GPEDC 2023, 7).

In the 4MR Framework, dimensions are “conceptual groupings to generate storylines based on the emerging results” while components are “conceptual sub-groupings of evidence collected... used to facilitate the narrative around the results emerging from each of the dimensions” (GPEDC 2023, 7).

The GPEDC presents various opportunities that are presented by participation in the 4MR to partner country governments, development partners (DPs), CSOs and other development actors. It uses the following terms and concepts which, for the purpose of consistency, will also be employed in this report:

- “Partner country” refers to the countries and territories that receive development cooperation and lead the implementation of the monitoring exercise at the country level. Some participating partner countries are both providers and recipients of development cooperation.
- “Development partner” refers to official agencies, or their executive agencies, that provide development cooperation. This includes the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and non-DAC bilateral partners as well as the United Nations (UN) Development System and multilateral development partners including, for example, multilateral development banks and vertical funds.
- “Other development actors” refers to other development stakeholders including civil society, the private sector, trade unions, foundations, parliaments and subnational governments (quoted from GPEDC 2023, 5).

The GPEDC also assigns reporting roles to each of the stakeholders, as presented in **Table 2**.

TABLE 2 OVERVIEW OF REPORTING ROLES PER COMPONENT OF THE FRAMEWORK		
DIMENSION	COMPONENT	WHO REPORTS
Whole-of-society	Engagement and dialogue	PCG, DPs
	Parliamentary oversight	PCG
	Enabling environment for civil society organizations (CSOs)	PCG, DPs, CSOs
	Private sector engagement in development co-operation	[all reporting via the Kampala Principles Assessment] PCG, DPs, the private sector, CSOs, trade unions
State and use of country systems	Planning	PCG, DPs*
	Respect country's policy space	DPs
	Public financial management	Evidence collated from available external assessments
	National budget	PCG, DPs
	Gender budgeting	PCG
	Accountability mechanisms	PCG
	Information management	PCG, DPs*
	Procurement	Evidence collated from available external assessments
Transparency	Countries' action	PCG
	Development partners' action	Evidence collated from available external assessments
Leaving no one behind	Consultation	PCG, DPs
	Targets and results	PCG, DPs
	Data and statistics	PCG, DPs
*Development partners only answer optional (complementary) questions for this component. Notes: PCG, partner country government; DPs: development partners.		

(Source: GPEDC 2023, 20)

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT WITH 4MR

As part of its preparations for the 4MR, the CPDE held a “CSO Training on the 4th Monitoring Round” in Brussels, Belgium in December 2023. There, it discussed the development effectiveness agenda and the GPEDC, the 4MR, the 4MR monitoring framework, and CSOs’ role in the 4MR (CPDE 2023b).

The CPDE underscored the importance of civil society for development effectiveness, with its important role as an independent development actor in its own right, recognized as early as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2008. CSOs are distinct from governments and DPs, and their policy objectives should be seen in this light.

CSOs play varied and important roles in development cooperation, from watchdogs to project implementers. They deliver development cooperation, as 20% of official development assistance (ODA) is channeled through them.

According to the CPDE, in accordance with the guidance of the GPEDC, CSOs are expected to participate in the entire 4MR process, particularly during:

- The inception phase
 - Identification of focal points
 - Kick-off meeting
- Data collection phase
 - Assessment of the enabling environment for CSOs
 - Assessment of the Kampala Principles on effective private sector engagement for development cooperation
- Data review and submission phase
- Dissemination of the results and transition to action
- Reflection, dialogue and action phase (GPEDC 2023b)

The CPDE is quick to point out that partner country governments, as leaders of the 4MR process at the national level, have the prerogative to decide whether to involve other stakeholders or not, how to involve them, and who among the stakeholders to involve.

The CPDE asserts the importance of CSO enabling environment to effective development cooperation and to attaining the 2030 Agenda. As such, it strongly encourages partner countries, as 4MR leaders in the country process, to work with national CSOs in providing information about CSO enabling environment. The 4MR tool on CSO enabling environment is itself an entry point to establishing multi-stakeholder dialogue and facilitating CSO engagement with the 4MR and the bigger development effectiveness agenda.

The 4MR is only an initial step and follow-up actions that address the findings and results of the assessment are even more important than the assessment itself. CSOs and their champions seek to create a thematic initiative on CSO enabling environment that will engage the monitoring results at the country level. Because of CSOs’ importance to development effectiveness, the GPEDC tool on CSO enabling environment should be seen as important for all GPEDC constituencies.

The CPDE operationalized CSO enabling environment into four elements:

- Partner country engagement with CSOs for democratic country ownership of national development strategies
- CSOs' own development effectiveness
- DPs' role in creating an enabling environment for CSOs to function as independent development actors
- Legal and regulatory frameworks that safeguard civic space and CSO enabling environment

These elements are seen as mutually-reinforcing, even as a legal and regulatory framework for civic space is seen as the foundation for the other elements (CPDE 2023b). Each of these elements are discussed in detail in the CSO enabling environment segment of the Conclusion, before the synthesis of the findings from the country reports.

THIS COLLECTION AND THE COUNTRY REPORTS

The present collection brings together and synthesizes country reports from the CPDE focal points from civil society in eight countries: Indonesia, Philippines (Southeast Asia), Honduras (Latin America), Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria (Africa), Bangladesh, and Nepal (South Asia). These country reports focus on the 4MR component of CSO enabling environment even as they contain information about other components and dimensions.

These country reports embody the preliminary efforts of civil society in the eight countries to engage with the 4MR – particularly in each country's data collection phase for, primarily, CSO enabling environment and, secondarily, the Kampala Principles on PSE, and other dimensions and components of the 4MR. They show partner country governments and DPs that the CSOs that created them are committed and capable to engage on the topics mentioned above.

From the perspective of the CPDE, these country reports represent efforts to jumpstart engagement of CSOs around the world with the 4MR. Through their example, admittedly of varying qualities, they show CSOs around the world about how to engage with the 4MR by gathering data and leading the assessment of CSO enabling environment, and contributing to the assessment of other 4MR dimensions and components, in their countries. They provide CSOs globally with concrete examples with which to compare and contrast their assessments.

With some qualifications, a case study approach can be used to examine the country reports in this collection. The country reports can be seen as samples of the population of partner countries, and causal factors – such as degree of development, democratization and civic space – can be examined in relation to CSO enabling environment and other dimensions and components of the 4MR Framework. Specific propositions or hypotheses about causation can be formed in the course of the examination (Gerring 2017).

The country reports gathered here, however, contain differing amounts of information in their responses to the 4MR framework. This report therefore is most useful in describing in detail country experiences rather than positing causation or correlation, showcasing depth rather than breadth (Gerring 2017). This report is self-consciously cautious when relating the trends and themes that emerge from the country reports to previous studies – such as the GPEDC and CPDE 3MR reports – as merely “indicating” or “suggesting” continuity, which is more often, or divergence, which is less often.

TABLE 3 | COUNTRIES WITH COUNTRY REPORTS: DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC SPACE, DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

DEVELOPMENT	DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC SPACE	DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
Indonesia: Upper Middle Income, HDI - 144	Ghana: CIVICUS Obstructed, FH Free	Bangladesh: 5,041 M, 1.2% of GNI
Philippines: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 116	Indonesia: CIVICS Obstructed, FH Partly Free	Nigeria: 3,357 M, 0.8% of GNI
Bangladesh: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 129	Nepal: CIVICUS Obstructed, FH Partly Free	Philippines: 1,632 M, 0.4 of GNI
Ghana: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 133	Honduras: CIVICUS Repressed, FH Partly Free	Nepal: 1,567 M, 4.2% of GNI
Honduras: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 137	Nigeria: CIVICUS Repressed, FH Partly Free	Cameroon: 1,1254 M, 2.5% of GNI
Nepal: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 143	Philippines: CIVICUS Repressed, FH Partly Free	Ghana: 1,227 M, 1.6% of GNI
Cameroon: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 151	Bangladesh: CIVICUS Closed, FH Partly Free	Honduras: 617 M, 2.4% of GNI
Nigeria: Lower Middle Income, HDI - 163	Cameroon: CIVICUS Repressed, FH Not Free	Indonesia: 612 M, 0.1% of GNI

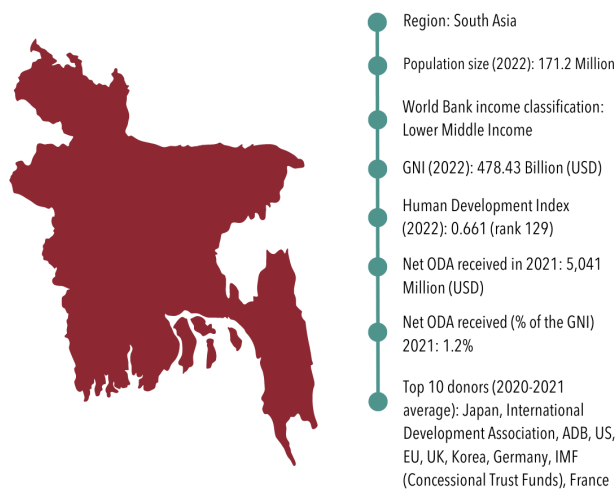
To enable readers to more fully understand the country reports in this collection, and to make their own observations, comparisons, contrasts and analyses, the development, democracy and civic space, and development cooperation information about the countries are presented in **Table 3** above – where the countries are ranked to show where most of them belong in the different metrics.

The development column draws from the World Bank income classification of countries and the United Nations Human Development Index – both contained in the Global Dashboard for the 4MR (GPEDC n.d.). The democracy and civic space column, meanwhile, draws from the Freedom House ranking for 2023 and the CIVICUS Monitor for 2023, both widely-recognized rankings in their fields. The development cooperation column draws from the net ODA received in 2021 and the Gross National Income percentage of ODA received in 2021 – both contained in the Global Dashboard for the 4MR.

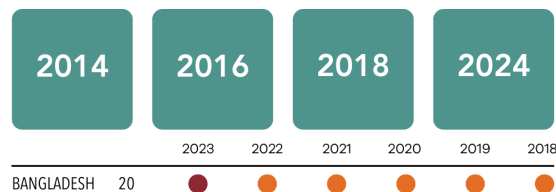
Almost all of the countries that have country reports in this collection are lower middle income countries. Not one among them has open or narrowed civic space, and all of them belong to the lowest three classifications of civic space according to CIVICUS – obstructed, repressed and closed. Majority have repressed civic spaces. With regard to freedom ranking, the majority are partly free and the two exceptions are either free or not free entirely. In terms of amount of development cooperation financing, half of the countries are in the more than USD 1 billion mark, while two are below and two are above that amount.

Figure 2 meanwhile presents basic information about the countries with country reports in this collection which were gathered from the Global Dashboard for the 4MR, the CIVICUS Monitor ranking from 2018-2023, and Freedom House ranking for 2023.

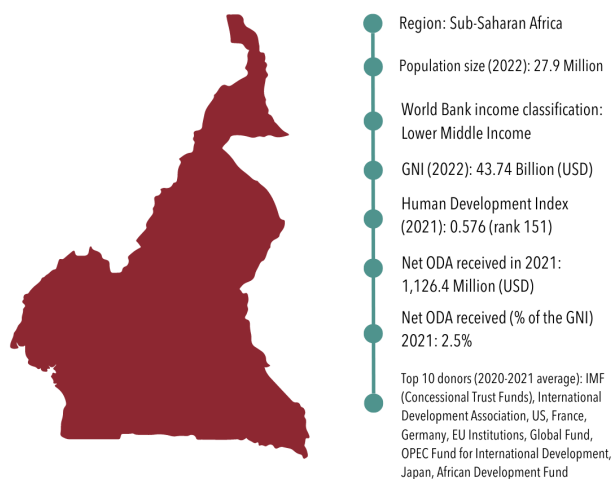
FIGURE 2 | PROFILES OF COUNTRIES BASED: 4MR GLOBAL DASHBOARD



PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING



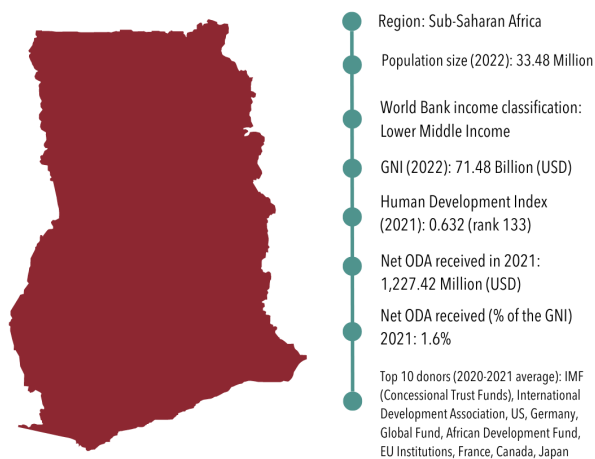
BANGLADESH
ONE OF THE BIGGEST 10-YEAR DECLINE (-13)
PARTLY FREE
Source: Freedom House



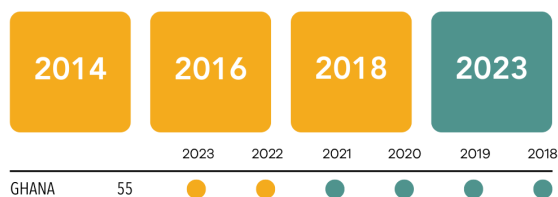
PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING



CAMEROON
NOT FREE
Source: Freedom House

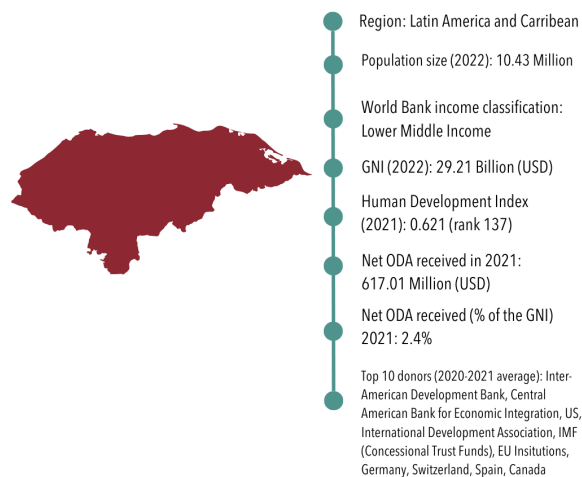


PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING

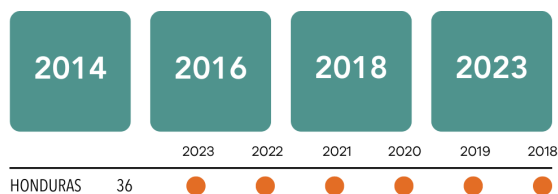


GHANA
FREE

Source: Freedom House



PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING

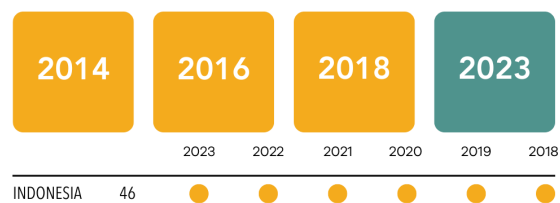


HONDURAS
PARTLY FREE

Source: Freedom House

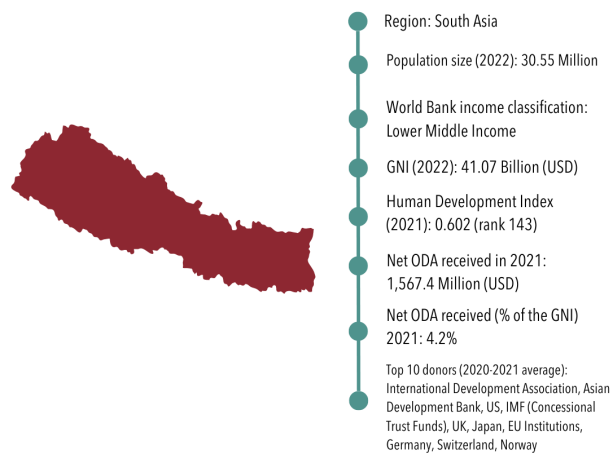


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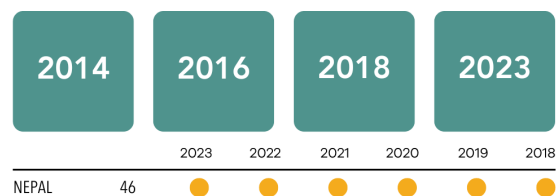


INDONESIA
PARTLY FREE

Source: Freedom House

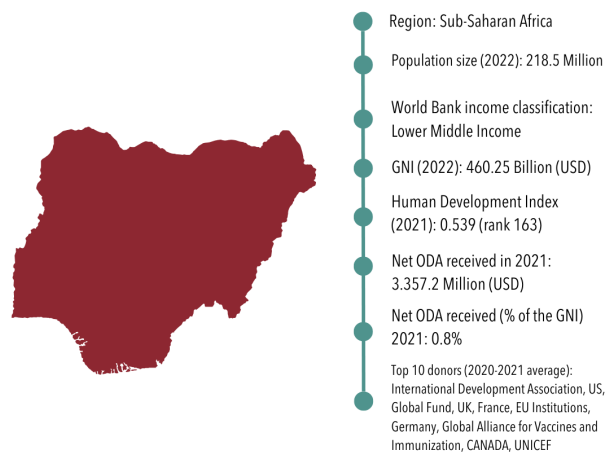


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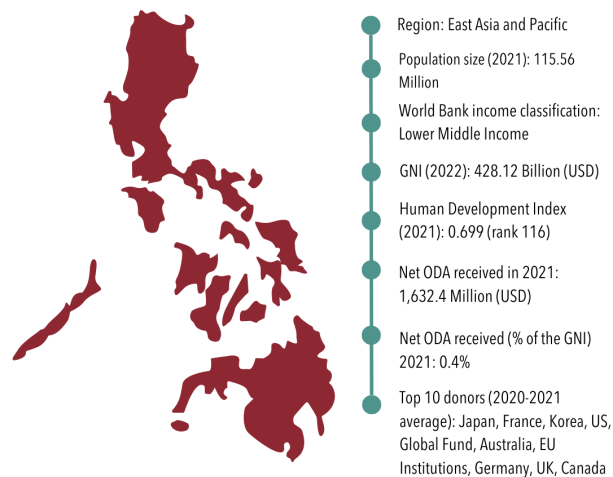


NEPAL
ONE OF THE BIGGEST GAINS IN A YEAR (+4)
PARTLY FREE

Source: Freedom House



PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING



PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP MONITORING



PLAN OF THIS REPORT

The country reports of the CPDE focal points follow this Introduction in this order: Indonesia, Philippines, Honduras, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

The Conclusion provides a synthesis of the country reports. It shows that, in relation to CSO enabling environment:

- While partner countries engage with CSOs in creating national development strategies, engagements are beset with challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization, as well as lack of relevant information.
- Majority of CSOs have adopted policies that are based on international standards that enhance their transparency and accountability, evidence about how these policies are translated into practice is weak.
- Except for including CSO enabling environment in their engagements with partner countries, there is little evidence that DPs worked to enhance CSO enabling environment.
- Most countries have legal and regulatory frameworks that should safeguard CSO enabling environment, but these are beset with violations and problems in implementation.

The Conclusion also shows that, with regard to overall development effectiveness, country reports in this collection provide evidence, of varying degrees of strength, that basic actions mandated by effective development cooperation principles, as embodied by the Busan Principles, enjoy buy-in by partner countries, DPs, and CSOs. Measured against the Busan Principles and the GPEDC 3MR report, however, significant challenges persist and appear to hinder progress in the development cooperation agenda – which has implications for the sustainable development agenda itself.

At the end of the Conclusion, the findings of the collection are summarized and recommendations – mostly on enhancing CSO enabling environment – are forwarded.

On August 16, 2023, the Director for Foreign Policy and International Development Cooperation, Ministry of National Development Planning/ Bappenas, as the national coordinator for Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) 4th Monitoring Report (4th MR), conducted a kick-off meeting to give an overview about the urgency and implementation of the GPEDC in Indonesia and share the country's [roadmap](#) for the GPEDC 4th MR. The objective of the kick-off meeting was to introduce the GPEDC initiative, benefits and tools and how the government will incorporate it in the ongoing National Midterm Development Plan 2024/2025 and carried forward to 2045 when Indonesia will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

The monitoring exercise is led by The Bappenas Ministry of Development Planning but as they also followed guidance from the GPEDC, each sector, i.e. CSOs, philanthropy, trade unions, the private sector and the government itself, have their own focal points to carry on the monitoring exercise. The key stakeholders or country actors identified during the kick-off meeting were quite prescriptive prior to the meeting. For each sector, the invitees were the focal points advised by the GPEDC committee as well as a few other actors recognized by the government. For CSOs, YAKKUM, INFID and Prakarsa were invited. For the trade unions, the government invited two national bodies of trade unions.

YAKKUM, as a member of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, is appointed as Indonesia's Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) focal person engaged in the national level official monitoring process for The Kampala Principles Assessment while INFID is appointed as CSOs focal person for the Standards Assessment.

After the kick-off meeting, YAKKUM took a proactive move by requesting a meeting with Bappenas in which we presented our initial steps to proceed with the CSOs consultation and asked for input and guidance from the government about our plan. We also mentioned our capacity, in translating the tools and contacting the local CSO network, and budget constraint so that the government would commit to support with more resource mobilization or validate the methodology so that the budget constraint won't affect the participation in the monitoring.

Data collection was conducted in November where 18 CSOs responded to the Standards Assessment and 17 CSOs responded to the Kampala Principles Assessment. The survey findings were presented to selected 15 CSOs to validate the survey findings and develop recommendations to strengthen the partnership for effective development cooperation in Indonesia.

Although the element of international development cooperation is incorporated in the national development plan, during the local consultation with CSOs, it was not clear to many how they can engage more at an operational level.

As this is the first time for the Indonesian government to participate in the GPEDC monitoring, the kick-off meeting was really an introduction for almost all of us present and the government is not in the position to make decisions on institutionalizing mechanisms. However there are strong views from CSOs during consultation that existing mechanisms, such as Sustainable Development Goals reporting by the SDGs national office, should be made more accessible. There is also a view to strengthen the existing mechanism such as village development planning and monitoring to have improved benefits or impact by making it more accessible, including a digital approach. However there is no concrete commitment on setting up a definite dialogue platform.

At the current stage, Bappenas is in the process of collating all monitoring and consultation reports from CSOs, trade unions and the private sector. Once all the collated reports are submitted online and facilitated by the Joint Support Team, Bappenas will inform and invite us for further talks. No specific policies are committed, but as [presented](#) by Bappenas in the kick-off meeting, international cooperation becomes a national priority. Process-wise, there is also quite a technical need to review the monitoring tools and process to submit the report as the existing process now is to have a final entry to every question, which makes it challenging for CSOs' input.

STATUS OF THE 4MR THEMES

This report is capturing CSOs perspective on development cooperation and is developed based on the responses to and consultations on:

1. C.1 Assessment of CSO enabling environment and development effectiveness that look into:

- Module 1: Space for CSO dialogue on national development policies
- Module 2: CSO development effectiveness: Accountability and transparency
- Module 3: Development cooperation with CSOs
- Module 4: Legal and regulatory framework

2. K-C: Questions for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that look into:

- K-C0 Contextual questions to start the KPA
- K-C1 The state of policies on private sector engagement in development cooperation (Key Metric 1)
- K-C2 Inclusive dialogue on private sector engagement in development cooperation (Key Metric 2)
- K-C3 The quality of private sector engagement in development cooperation in partner countries (Key Metric 3)
- K-C4 The ease of partnering in private sector engagement in development cooperation (Key Metric 4)

1. Whole of society

Space for CSOs dialogue on National Development Policies

The government occasionally consults CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies, but the quality of consultation is not sufficient, with reference to full diversity of participation, agreed content, and format allowing for dialogue. At best, only minor comments and occasional advice and evidence provided by CSOs through consultations are taken into account in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies.

In the context of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), some selected CSOs are occasionally being consulted around SDG mainstreaming, implementation and monitoring. CSOs have mixed experience in timely access to relevant and comprehensive information. CSOs have the right in law to access relevant government information for effective participation in consultations with the government. But there are very significant limitations in the law and/or in its implementation, excluding CSO access to most relevant information in practice.

Development cooperation with CSOs

Development partners occasionally conduct consultations with limited CSOs and focus only on the implementation of donor programmes. Some development partners occasionally include some elements of the enabling environment agenda as an item in their policy dialogue with the government, particularly if CSOs lobby on specific issues.

Development partner funding tends to focus on implementing their own programming priorities through unpredictable calls for proposals and funding opportunities. There is restricted access to funding for CSOs. In terms of public information, some development partners make aggregate information available on their support to CSOs at the country level.

Private Sector Engagement

1. The state of policies on private sector engagement in development cooperation

Most CSOs have been engaged with private sectors in program design, implementing partners and as beneficiaries. Very few CSOs are co-founder of a program or project. Majority of CSOs are aware of any national policy/strategy of the government on the private sector's role in development cooperation, but involvement of CSOs in elaboration of a policy/strategy which refers to the role of the private sector in development cooperation are limited.

2. Inclusive dialogue on private sector engagement in development cooperation

Less than half of CSOs are engaged by the government in national dialogue on Private Sectors Engagement (PSE) in development cooperation. Additionally, majority of the CSOs involved in the dialogue stated that the most recent national dialogue, organized by the government on the role of the private sector in development cooperation, is very limited in addressing CSOs concerns, not many of CSOs view is taken on board by the government in follow-up actions and the dialogue also resulted in very few or limited joint collaboration between CSOs and other stakeholder groups.

3. The quality of private sector engagement in development cooperation in partner countries

Majority of the CSO respondents agreed that private sector engagement in development cooperation has helped to raise funds, build skills or expertise and reduce the perceived risk of the private sector to make/deliver products and/or services relevant for development outcomes.

More than one third of the CSOs respondents stated that private sector engagement in development cooperation delivers results geared towards sectors, regions and target groups that are considered priorities in Indonesia.

Only 35.3% of CSO respondents stated that PSE in development cooperation programmes/projects in Indonesia are aligned with national standards, such as environmental, social and governance standards and/or labor standards; and 23.5% of respondents stated that PSE in development cooperation programmes/projects in Indonesia are aligned with relevant international standards, such as International Labour Organization standards and UN Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Based on CSOs' experience, less than five development partners have involved CSOs in carrying out joint assessments of the potential environmental, social and governance risks of PSE partnerships as part of their due diligence. Only 41.2% of CSOs monitored and collected results on PSE in development cooperation projects and programmes and only 35.3% of those made the monitoring results publicly available.

Majority of CSOs are not aware if the government has a complaints mechanism on PSE in development cooperation and those that are aware of the mechanism said that the mechanism is not adequate and useful. According to CSOs' experience, only few development partners they have worked with have complaints mechanisms on PSE in development cooperation.

4. The ease of partnering in private sector engagement in development cooperation

Based on CSOs overall experience, more than two-thirds of CSO respondents stated that it is easy or somewhat easy for the private sector to access resources from development partners and engage in related partnerships in Indonesia.

The top five drivers that could strengthen private sector engagement and partnership in development cooperation are:

1. Clearer information on how a PSE project can also be commercially successful for the private sector partner.
2. Clearer communication on what PSE opportunities are available.
3. More information-sharing across stakeholders on funding opportunities and challenges encountered, among others.
4. More funding opportunities from development partners.
5. More information-sharing and harmonization across development partners to streamline processes and procedures required of private sector partners.

2. State and use of country systems

Legal and regulatory framework

On Freedom of Assembly, most peaceful assemblies are allowed in law and practice, although some issues or groups may be subject to discriminatory decision making.

On Freedom of Expression, expression by CSOs and their members is mostly free of control by the government, with some instances of government interference, in news and internet media. Threats and arbitrary actions against CSOs, human rights defenders and journalists are often investigated. Government apparatus conducts legal surveillance and interception of communications, but may also conduct illegal or questionable interceptions.

With respect to the freedom of association, registration is voluntary, and moderately demanding. With a few exceptions, law and practice do not hinder CSOs' activities.

CSOs working with vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population have legal protection, and there is minimal discrimination and harassment in practice. But public authorities may scrutinize activities or harass specific organizations. Access to either national or international resources is possible but is subjected to government regulations and aligning with the national government directive.

3. Transparency

CSO development effectiveness: Accountability and transparency

Less than 5% of domestic CSOs have long-term partnership relationships that are the result of deliberate negotiations and shared programming interests and solidarity between the funded CSO and the financing CSO. Most domestic CSOs experience short-term and mid-term project relationships, which are largely based on projects and defined by the financing CSO.

In terms of coordination, there isn't one inclusive and representative CSO-initiated platform. But different CSO-initiated coordination mechanisms exist at both the sectoral and national levels and are sustained by the interests of domestic CSOs to improve their development effectiveness.

In implementing their development work, CSOs in the country generally have policies and programmes guided by international human rights standards and principles. But the evidence of consistent external and internal practice is minimal and only among a few large CSOs.

There are broadly representative CSO-initiated standards/codes for accountability and transparency through mechanisms with CSO platforms. But there are no formal procedures to certify adherence or develop new capacities consistent with the standard. CSOs generally have organizational information available on their website.

4. Leave No One Behind

Government and development partners do not have inclusive platforms that enable meaningful participation and accommodate perspectives of vulnerable and marginalized groups engaged in preparing national development strategies and assessment towards development cooperation targets. The national development strategies are considering gender and disability inclusion in their documents. The disaggregated sex, age and disability data is also available in some strategic documents. The existence of the gender working groups in various levels across ministries and disabilities service units are recognised but there is a lack of capacity to translate gender, disabilities and inclusion into operational and effective development programs.

Lessons and Challenges

Lesson & Challenges in the 4MR processes

Indonesia conducted the 4th MR before the GPEDC 4th monitoring training and therefore there have been some gaps in the 4th MR processes, such as:

- Before being engaged in Global Partnership Monitoring, 88.2% of respondents stated that CSOs did not know about Kampala Principles for effective PSE in development cooperation.
- The unclear definition or terminology about the private sector in Kampala Principles caused confusion in answering the questionnaire.
- Measures or indicators on inclusive partnership are not definite and are open to multiple interpretations and contributory to an unfocused scope of discussion

Lesson & Challenges for Effective Development Cooperation

There are some example of good practices on effective development cooperation in Indonesia:

The issuance of Government Regulation No. 60/2020 on Disability Services Unit in the Employment Sector and Minister of Manpower Regulation No.21/2020 on Guidelines for Implementing Disability Services Units in the Employment Sector that can be channels to bridge disability job seekers with government and the private sector. The Indonesian Entrepreneurs Association has issued a company guide book for employing people with disabilities.

- OHANA has freedom and creativity to adjust the needs of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations to be in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' principles and the Agenda 2030 goal 10 on reducing inequality, in particular addressing disability issues, stigma and discrimination related to access to assistive devices, access to information and meaningful participation of the organizations of persons with disabilities. However this is made possible through funding support from development partners.
- The role of the private sector in facilitating medium and small entrepreneurship in form of business consultations, product marketing, effective coordination and empowerment programs for persons with disabilities and marginalized groups to become independent entrepreneurs. This is an experience from Walang Perempuan, a small NGO in Eastern Indonesia.
- Another example is from HWDI (National Association of Women with Disabilities), which manages partnership in capacity development and facilitating business access for women with disabilities wanting to be successful entrepreneurs. It resulted in capacity building for 500 women with disabilities and their caregivers in five districts in East Java and since 2019, they have been sustaining their medium and small enterprises.

Based on CSOs' experience, private sector engagement in development cooperation has not optimally contributed towards realizing development outcomes due to lack of incentives and law enforcement, unequal partnership, lack of inclusion, and lack of transparency and accountability. For example, Indonesia has a minimum employee quota policy for people with disabilities according to Law no. 8 of 2016 Article 53, which states that at least 2% of public institutions and at least 1% in private institutions must be persons with disabilities. However, the quota policy has not increased participation of people with disabilities into the job market.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Government has initiated the development consultation with various stakeholders including CSOs, but majority of CSOs feel that there is a lack of CSO engagement in the government's policy development. The vast geographical landscape of Indonesia and the huge number of CSOs (more than 500,000 CSOs registered in Social Affair offices) are causing this gap in the consultation process, to name a few factors. The lack of an inclusive platform for development cooperation, a lack of access to public information, and funding constraints are the main challenges for CSOs' contribution and sustainability. Government and development partners need to recognise CSOs' roles and uniqueness where CSOs tend to focus on social movement instead of bureaucracy. Therefore government and development partners need to create an enabling environment and capacity strengthening for CSOs, and bridge partnership between CSOs and private sectors in development cooperation.

Next steps

1. Government and development partners need to localize SDGs and strengthen the enabling environment to partner with CSOs for development effectiveness.
2. Government and development partners should listen to CSOs, recognise their roles, provide capacity strengthening including organizations for people with disabilities, simplify funding mechanisms, employ adaptive project management, and prioritize local CSOs as program implementers.
3. Widen the existing development consultative platform in various levels to be inclusive and accessible so that collaboration for development cooperation, which consists of governments, private sectors and CSOs are more robust and includes effective and results-based monitoring evaluation systems.

Kampala Principles Inclusive Dialogue in Indonesia:

Exploring opportunity for collaboration between Government - Private Sectors - CSOs

As a follow up to the GPEDC 4th monitoring report, YAKKUM - a CPDE member in Indonesia that was appointed as CSO focal person to coordinate the Kampala Principles Assessment, conducted an inclusive dialogue which aimed to share Kampala Principles Assessment key findings, exchange knowledge and practice on private sector engagement in development cooperation, and discuss how CSOs can strengthen collaboration with private sectors and government in development cooperation. This event was conducted online on April 18, 2024, and was attended by 30 participants from the government, CSOs, philanthropy and private sectors. From the CSOs, representatives of persons with disabilities and other marginal groups such as transgender and CSOs from remote provinces such as Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan and Sulawesi, were present.

The Director for Foreign Policy and International Development Cooperation of the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, Mr. Hendra Wahanu Prabandani, highlighted in his opening speech the importance of multi-stakeholder participation and wished that the dialogue can be a venue for sharing experience and actors mapping in development cooperation. As the national coordinator for the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) 4th Monitoring Report, he emphasized that the mechanism should be found to make such sharing more effective and opened the opportunity to include the result of the workshop in the 4MR final report which is now still being finalized by the United Nations Development Programme and Bappenas.

In this inclusive dialogue, three resource persons were invited to share their experience in CSO - private sector partnership. Rita Triharyani from YAKKUM shared the key findings from Kampala Principles Assessment conducted in 2023, in which consultation with CSOs in development issues are still relatively low and lack inclusivity, as very few issues that are important for CSOs are addressed by the government. CSOs believe that the private sector plays an important role in development cooperation and creates an enabling environment for CSOs. But still there is a lack of collaboration between CSOs and the private sector. However, some good practices on CSOs and private sectors partnership are identified, such as:

1. The issuance of Government Regulation No. 60/2020 on Disability Services Unit in the Employment Sector and Minister of Manpower Regulation No.21/2020 on Guidelines for Implementing Disability Services Units in the Employment Sector that can be a way to bridge disability job seekers with government and the private sector. The Indonesian Entrepreneurs Association has issued a company guide book for employing people with disabilities.
2. The role of the private sector in facilitating medium and small entrepreneurship in form of business consultations, product marketing, effective coordination and empowerment programs for persons with disabilities and marginalized groups to become independent entrepreneurs. This is an experience from Walang Perempuan, a small NGO in Eastern Indonesia.
3. Another example is from HWDI (National Association of Women with Disabilities), which manages partnership in capacity development and facilitating business access for women with disabilities wanting to be successful entrepreneurs. It resulted in capacity building for 500 women with disabilities and their caregivers in five districts in East Java and since 2019, they have been sustaining their medium and small enterprises.

Rokhmad Munawwir shared YAPPIKA's experience in mobilizing resources from national and international philanthropy and the private sectors which contributes to around 20% of their total organizational funding. Rokhmad pointed out that there are three main challenges for CSOs in accessing funding from private sectors.

The first challenge is from the government, which requires CSOs who raise public donations to report quarterly to the Ministry, which is no longer relevant, as it is time consuming to renew every 3 months and regulations are outdated but are still referred to by Social Affairs Offices at the local levels. Also, there is a misperception that funding for non-profit organizations should not be used for operational cost. The second challenge is the unequal partnership and lack of trust between CSOs and the private sector, where there is a conflict of interest between the private sector's agenda and CSOs' organizational values. The third challenge is the gap in capacities from the CSOs, where there is a lack of knowledge and systematic management skills.

Beta Tony Agus, from ExxonMobil Cepu, a big mining company, explained the models in which companies worked with CSO only in surrounding areas where they operate; or companies which can work with CSO, in many various areas regardless where they operate as their product and services do not require distinctive geographical setting. He also explained the lessons they got over the years when a private company like his, provided many skill trainings to the underprivileged communities just to find that the product could not be marketed as they did not prepare the proper supply chain. One take away from his session is the importance for the private sector and the CSOs to value their "investment" by showing the return or impact financially and socially.

After the sharing session, participants discussed how to improve CSOs engagement in development cooperation coordination, implementation and monitoring evaluation, which generated the following recommendations:

1. Create an inclusive platform for development cooperation and development progress reports with online databases that are accessible for local and national actors. The existing SDGs report is not known nor accessible to most CSOs.
 2. CSOs can contribute to evidence-based monitoring and learning from a local perspective that complements the government's national monitoring perspective. There is a substantial need to improve the government's perspective on gender, disability and social inclusion.
 3. While there is a demand to invest in capacity building for CSOs, CSOs can also provide support to government and private sectors as technical experts in research, thematic areas and cross-cutting issues.
 4. There is a substantial need to organizationally enhance CSOs' capacity, especially for financial sustainability and creative resource mobilization, as they usually work in low-resource settings while donors, the private sector and government support remain limited or restricted. A few other ideas are training for capacity to measure return of investment of the community project supported by the private sector, for capacity to develop accountable reports as well as develop effective coordination and reporting mechanisms to the government.
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PHILIPPINES

Report by The Council for People's Development and Governance (CPDG)

In response to the invitation of the global secretariat of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) the Philippines is among the 56 countries participating in the 2024 Fourth Monitoring Round (4MR) of the GPEDC for countries' compliance with the principles and corresponding mechanisms and guidelines set forth by the countries supporting the advocacy for effective development cooperation.

The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) serves as the Philippine GPEDC Secretariat and leads the monitoring exercise among the development actors involved in the process. The country has taken a lead role in the previous monitoring exercises. It actively engaged in the previous global monitoring rounds in 2014, 2016, and 2018 respectively, to assess its progress in meeting global commitments made during the 2011 Busan High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

On March 22, 2024 the NEDA invited key development actors including country focal persons for specific sectors to the kick-off meeting where it presented the monitoring process. An overview of the GPEDC and its role in the international development agenda was discussed. This was followed by a sharing on the Results of the 3rd Monitoring Round in 2018 and finally, the Fourth Monitoring Round Framework, Process, Tools, and Timelines.



The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) Kick-off Meeting for the Fourth Monitoring Round was organized by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) on March 22, 2024 from 1:00-3:00 PM at the NEDA Office of the Secretary Conference Room, the Mega Tower, EDSA, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City (Photo: CPDG)

National Timeline for the 4MR

The country's 4MR GPEDC has five phases. These are:

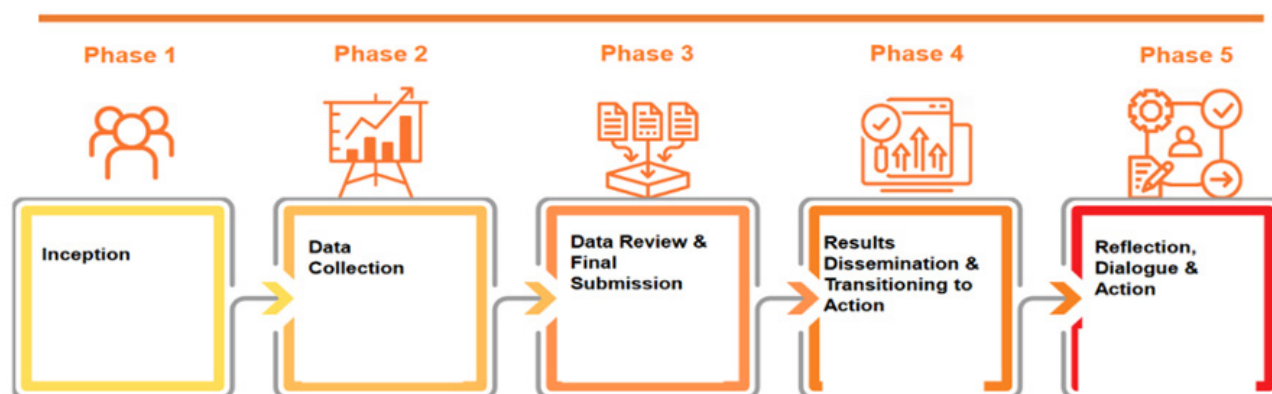
Phase 1: Inception, from January to March 2024, which is the preparatory phase including the kick-off meeting conducted on March 22, 2024.

Phase 2: Data Collection, from the first to fourth week of April 2024, for the focal persons for the major sectors including the Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and trade unions. A customized tool for CSO enabling environment assessment and development effectiveness is provided by the GPEDC Secretariat.

Phase 3: Data Review & Final Submission, from May to the first week of July 2024

Phase 4: Results Dissemination & Transitioning to Action, from the third week of July to the first week of August 2024

Phase 5: Reflection, Dialogue & Action, from the second week to the fourth week of August 2024



Reporting Year of Reference: 2023

Figure 1. Phasing of the 4MR GPEDC, Philippines. Source: GPEDC PH Secretariat

Objectives

According to the NEDA, the GPEDC 4MR process aims to assess the opportunities and challenges in building and strengthening partnerships between and among development actors and countries; and in aligning efforts toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GPEDC, since its inception from aid effectiveness discourse, had evolved to development effectiveness due to multiple crises, poverty, and inequality, even before the onset of Covid-19. The goal is supposed to be transformative, emphasizing multi-stakeholder participation – to achieve increased inclusivity.

But shortcomings highlighted in past monitoring rounds persist, particularly concerning assessments and the lack of inclusive participation, transparency, and accountability, exacerbated by autocratic governments and the aftermath of the pandemic.

The monitoring rounds, previously held every two years (2014, 2016, 2018), are now accelerated, covering the period from 2022 to 2026. The Philippines plays a significant role as part of the global secretariat of the high-level GPEDC. Notably, the NEDA previously represented the country in these forums.

Now, the focus is on the experiences of development actors and their engagement with government mechanisms to achieve development plans and goals within the framework of SDGs, particularly Agenda 2023. One such mechanism discussed is the Enhanced Development Plan, which involves a wide range of CSO participation.

The development effectiveness principles, as outlined in the Istanbul Principles of Effectiveness established in 2011, are pertinent. These principles emphasize an enabling environment for CSOs despite shrinking spaces for development workers or actors, aiming to assert civic and democratic space for development and democracy.

The NEDA enjoined stakeholders to participate and cooperate with the focal points in the consultations to be conducted, explaining that the monitoring exercise will benefit stakeholders specifically through the following:

1. It will aid advocacy efforts through inclusive dialogue with a broad range of development actors.
2. The exercise will yield country-specific results, alongside global aggregates, that serve as crucial evidence for development actors to identify strengths and opportunities. This evidence will guide actions aimed at maximizing the impact of their work.
3. It will inform and shape policies for improved development cooperation.
4. It will contribute to monitoring specific SDG indicators and will inform Voluntary National Review processes.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Focal points have been assigned to assist the NEDA, through the National Coordinator Undersecretary Joseph Capuno, in gathering evidence-based data. The Council for People's Development and Governance (CPDG) serves as the focal point for CSOs; the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) is the focal point for the trade unions; and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for development partners. There is also an assigned focal point for the private sector – large and small enterprises.

The Association of Foundations (AF) has been assigned by the GPEDC Global Secretariat through the CSOs Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) as the focal point for Philanthropic Organizations. However the sector is yet to be formally recognized and a specific set of tools has not been prepared to cover the concerns of the sector. The GPEDC set of monitoring tools has not been prepared either.

Fourth Monitoring Exercise (2023-2026)

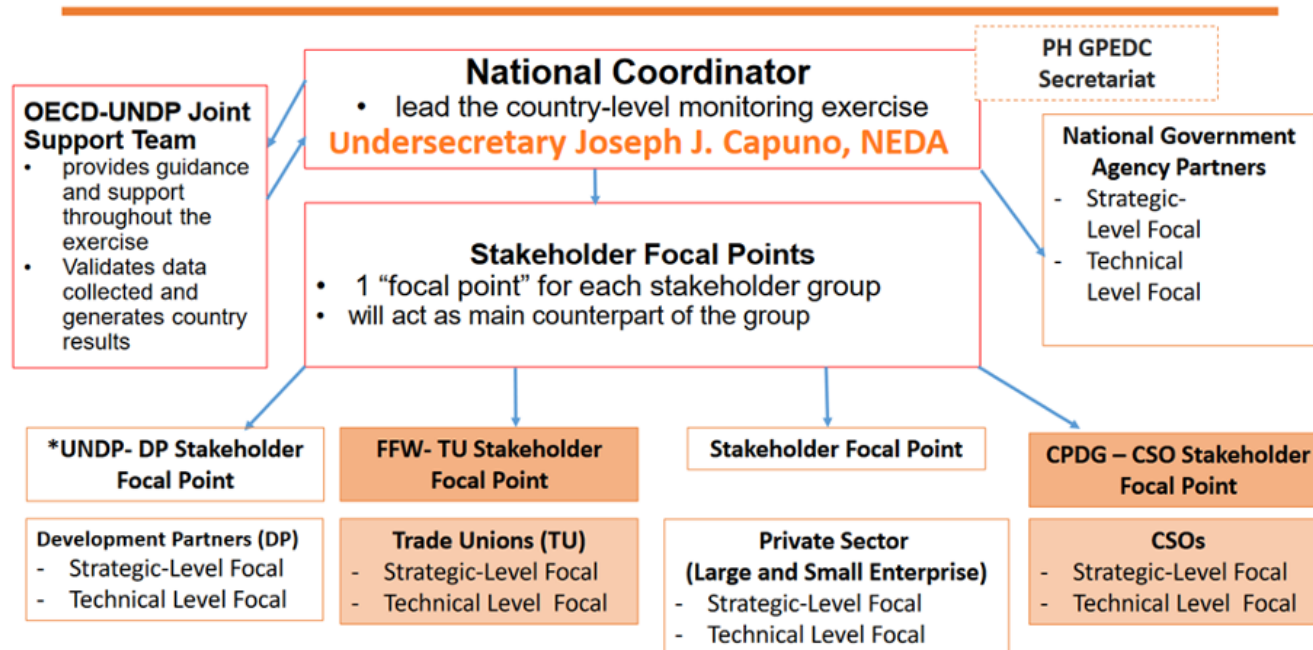


Figure 2. Structure of the 4MR GPEDC, Philippines. Source: GPEDC PH Secretariat

National government and agency partners, i.e., the Department of Agriculture, Department of Social Work and Development, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Finance among others, are also part of the stakeholders being consulted.

The Joint Support Team of the OECD-UNDP (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - United Nations Development Programme) provides guidance and support throughout the monitoring process; and will validate data collected and the generation of results as uploaded by the country sectors' focal points in the designated portals.

Each of the focal points were requested to assign a technical focal point and a senior level focal point. For CPDG, the National Coordinator, Maria Jennifer H. Guste is the Technical Focal Point, while the Senior Level Focal Point is CPDG Vice President Rochelle M. Porras. Ms. Porras is also the Executive Director of the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER).

The components and mechanics of the monitoring tool were discussed. Specifically, the tools were designed for each of the main stakeholders to review the following:

- (a.1) national development plans and strategies
- (a.2) institutionalized mechanisms
- (a.3) platforms for dialogue
- (a.4) policies or processes

The primary information for the review process will come from the consultations undertaken by the sectoral focal points. The answers to be encoded by the focal points are consensually agreed upon by all stakeholders consulted. Only the focal points assigned can access the GPEDC portal for encoding the answers.

Main questions raised during the kick-off meeting include the feasibility of the timeline; on whether the monitoring tool can be improved or revised. The government agencies can propose revisions to the tools that concern them but the CSOs monitoring tool can no longer be revised. Stakeholders negotiated for a more flexible timeline for data gathering.

There is no budget support allocated for the conduct of the consultations to be undertaken by the stakeholders. The Secretariat indicated they will try to arrange but made no commitments.

A separate meeting was held with the focal persons for CSOs, Trade Unions and Philanthropic Sector on April 3, 2024 where the GPEDC PH Secretariat explained further the mechanics of the monitoring, including the guide to answering the questions or so-called characteristics of practice provided by the GPEDC Global Secretariat. The focal points committed to providing context to all the answers, and likewise, the organizations consulted including their brief background. A timeline was requested to be submitted. The consultations will be published in the websites of the focal points and should mention the PH Secretariat.

The Philanthropic Sector for this monitoring round is clustered with the CSOs. Answers to the CSOs monitoring tools will include Trade Unions and workers' organizations. But the Kampala Principles monitoring tool will be answered separately by the CSOs and Trade Unions with the workers' organizations.

The focal points were tasked with:

1. Supporting the National Coordinator in ensuring the engagement of CSOs (a) in reaching a country-level consensus for the assessment of "Civil Society Organizations Enabling Environment", to be conducted jointly among CSOs, Trade Unions and Philanthropic Foundation stakeholder groups; and (b) in providing for the Private Sector Engagement;
2. Providing technical support and guidance (a) in assisting other CSOs, who may be new to the monitoring exercise, to understand the monitoring process and framework, through orientations/briefings, as necessary; and (b) in collecting data from CSOs, which may be accomplished through a survey, consultative meetings, and workshops, in coordination with the National Coordinator;
3. Coordinating directly with the NEDA/National Coordinator to facilitate the monitoring survey among the participating CSOs, and providing complementary information to contextualize CSOs' responses for the Fourth Monitoring Round, particularly for the "Civil Society Organizations Enabling Environment" and the "Kampala Principles Assessment for Private Sector Engagement";
4. Developing an activity timeline/work plan and providing regular updates to the NEDA or National Coordinator on the progress of its implementation.

The Monitoring Tools

There are two sets of monitoring tools for CSOs.

The first set includes the CSOs development effectiveness (DE) and enabling environment (EE). It comprises 17 questions that are organized in four thematic modules based on the CSO EE and DE principles.¹

Module 1 is on the CSO's dialogue on national development policies which looks at multi-stakeholder dialogue as a key element of the CSO EE. It answers the main question "to what extent does the government consult CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies?".²

Module 2 on CSO DE is focused on what CSOs can do to address their effectiveness, transparency, and accountability to effectively engage in development. It answers the question "to what extent are partnerships equitable based on mutual interest between financing CSOs and their CSO partners?".³

Module 3 is on Development Partners' Support for CSOs Enabling Environment, i.e., on how development cooperation providers offer financial support to CSOs and to their broader non-financial engagement with CSOs.⁴

Module 4 tackles the legal and regulatory environment, looking at what governments can do through laws, policies, and practice, to create an environment favorable to CSOs. It answers the question "to what extent does the legal and regulatory framework enable CSOs to exercise these rights in law and practice?".⁵

The second set is for monitoring the Kampala Principles Assessment for Private Sector engagement.

Status of 4MR Themes

Country system for development cooperation

What is the state of the country's core systems for development cooperation and how do development partners align and use them?

As of the latest available data, the country does not have a national development cooperation policy.⁶

It has mechanisms set up for cooperation and for monitoring these. For instance, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has a Development Cooperation Framework which outlines the basis on which DTI engages with multilateral financial institutions, development organizations and representatives of partner foreign governments, to achieve its mandate discussed extensively in the Philippine Development Plan. These development partners provide pathways, expertise and resources that are relevant to DTI's organizational outcomes, particularly in rural agri-based medium, small and microenterprises, inclusive growth, gender and development, green growth, climate change mitigation and adaptation, good governance, UN sustainable development goals, and other areas of international commitment by the Government of the Philippines.⁷

According to the DTI, partnerships in these areas are designed, developed, and implemented in projects in a manner that promotes and strengthens specific sectoral and sub-sectoral outcomes that are implemented by different bureaus, agencies, and its partners.⁸

There is likewise the Philippines Development Forum (PDF)⁹ which was also mentioned by the NEDA in its March 22, 2024 4MR GPEDC kick-off meeting with the stakeholders. But meetings through the forum are no longer held according to the NEDA.¹⁰

Development cooperation reports include the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Portfolio Review which the NEDA reports to Congress each June of the year as required under the 1996 ODA Law, which also created the Congressional Oversight Committee on ODA or the COCODA to monitor ODA flows and ODA funded programs and projects implementation in the country. The ODA Annual Report provides the status of all projects financed by ODA and accordingly identifies the causes of implementation and completion delays or the reasons for bottlenecks, cost overruns (actual and prospective), including the project or program's viability and sustainability.¹¹

The Aid Information Management System based on the Sahana Eden based Relief Goods Inventory and Monitoring System (RGIMS) is currently being used by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for managing the delivery of humanitarian aid across the country. RGIMS is a web-based application that monitors the progress of relief goods in warehouses throughout the country from the time they are first requested by the DSWD field offices to their handover to implementing partner and local government units.^{12 13}

Institutionally, the NEDA leads the coordination of development cooperation – including the annual ODA Reviews. Meanwhile the review, approval, and management of appropriate development finance are overseen by the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Finance.¹⁴

Country partners align their programs for cooperation in the country using the Ambisyon Natin 2040 vision of building a prosperous predominantly middle-income class Philippine society where no one is poor and left behind. Among others, they refer to the Philippine Development Plan (PDP), which is the country's blueprint for achieving the SDGs towards Agenda 2030.^{15 16}

The latest GPEDC monitoring round in 2018 reported by the Philippine government indicated an improved use of country-owned results frameworks by development partners from 64% in 2016 to 68% in 2018. In terms of country objectives, from 85% in 2016 to 100% in 2018.

However, the indicators, availability, and quality of data, as well as joint evaluations showed a declining trend. There was a marked 12 percentage points decline in joint evaluations from 58% in 2016 to 46% in 2018.

According to the study “Fostering evaluation culture in the Philippines”, authored by Aldwin Urbina and published in 2023, ODA-funded programs and projects were mostly undertaken by development partners through external evaluators.¹⁷

Monitoring and Evaluation in the Philippines

Crucial to assessing whether programs and projects are effective, sustainable, relevant, and bringing the targeted results and outcomes is a systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process supported by adequate budget and capable human resources to undertake the process.

The Philippine Government adopted results-based management in public sector management aimed at improving transparency, accountability, and efficiency in a multi-faceted approach involving several key reforms. Starting in 2007, reforms were done in the budget preparation and execution; followed by reforms in the financial management system in 2009, in the performance management system in 2011, and in national government planning in 2010. In the main, the reforms aimed to create a results-oriented public sector, accountable to citizens, and efficient in delivering public services. By linking performance to budgeting and employee incentives, and by streamlining planning and monitoring processes, the government seeks to enhance its effectiveness in serving the public. It introduced sector-specific results matrices in the medium-term plan of the national government.¹⁸

Despite these mechanisms and supporting policies being put in place to implement M&E in responsible government agencies, reviews on the M&E processes in the country point out that the M&E process is yet to be fully implemented and the results and benefits are yet to be seen or felt.^{19 20}

Urbina in 2023 pointed out that evaluation in the country is yet to be systematically integrated in the processes and systems of the government. M&E has been conducted only on a few select programs and projects, but are largely initiated by international development institutions. As such, M&E processes have not influenced policymaking in the country. Despite several attempts to institutionalize and legislate a national evaluation policy in the country, significant progress remains to be made in getting solid support among major actors and stakeholders for ensuring systematic and consistent use of evaluations in the formulation, implementation, and assessment of public programs and policies.²¹

The Senate Economic and Policy Office in its policy brief “Institutionalizing a National Evaluation Policy”, published in June 2021, observed that M&E in the Philippines is limited and has not been widely integrated in the processes and systems of the government. While there is presently a National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF), it suffers from some weaknesses. According to the study, M&E is fragmented across government agencies and only covers the government’s Executive branch. The NEPF does not require all government offices to implement M&E activities, which is unfortunate because M&E, if done well and systematically, will ensure that all major and strategic policies, programs, and projects are evaluated periodically.²²

Furthermore, while several Philippine laws already include a provision or section for its M&E activities, M&E is still not being put into practice by concerned agencies and policymakers. In most cases, designated agencies or committees, under certain laws, only focus on monitoring activities as they provide data produced out of the programs or projects to both Houses of Congress. But often these data do not provide needed information on policy impacts, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability.²³

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAMS, PROJECTS AND POLICIES		
National level	Purpose	Outcome
NEDA Project Monitoring Staff (1987) - Ex-Post evaluation division was established to evaluate completed programs.	Monitor and evaluate development programs and projects.	NEDA's evaluation mandate was reduced to coordination of donor's evaluation activities. Constrained by lack of funding to undertake its own evaluation.
1996 ODA Act	Mandated the NEDA to review the performance of ongoing projects funded in whole or in part by ODA.	Evaluations of ODA-funded programs and projects were conducted, but mostly undertaken by development partners through external evaluators.
Organizational Performance Indicator Framework or OPIF (2000)	Improve the budget allocation, spending, and reporting towards greater accountability and transparency in delivery of public services. It shifted budget focus from inputs to outputs.	Implemented inadequately and constrained by (1) fragmented performance management systems; (2) agencies reporting poor quality of performance information; (3) reporting of agencies' performance targets was in a separate document from the budget documents. The OPIF Book contained the agencies' budgets based on the Major Final Outputs or MFOs and the performance indicators and targets. The OPIF Book had also been submitted late to Congress which made the budget deliberations more focused on costs, inputs and line items rather than on outputs; (4) the OPIF had limited coverage of the MFOs and indicators.

National Evaluation Policy Framework or NEPF (2015) through Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2015-01	Govern the practice of evaluation of programs and projects receiving budgetary support from the government. Provide clear guiding principles and evaluation standards to serve as guidepost in the conduct of public sector evaluation.	Operationalization has been stalled due to standoff among major actors responsible for moving it forward, varying levels of evaluation capacities across agencies, very limited budget for the conduct of evaluations and difficulties in setting up independent evaluation units across agencies. The JMC applied only to the agencies of the Executive branch, and like other Executive circulars, its implementation is subject to uncertainty and can easily be reversed whenever there is a change in administration or even just a change in internal priorities.
Policy Window Philippines or PWP (2014)	The PWP is a joint initiative of the NEDA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Government of Australia, and the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). The program seeks to improve the culture of use of evidence in development policy and programming by generating high-quality and rigorous evidence on topical issues confronting decision-makers; and strengthen the capacity of government agencies to institutionalize and implement evidence-based decision-making to support the implementation of the NEPF.	In 2014-2020, five impact evaluation studies were conducted on key government programs i.e., on labor and employment, social welfare, and judicial reforms – to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programs to inform and improve decision-making. A high-level policy forum was organized to facilitate discussions among policymakers, stakeholders, and experts on the findings and implications of the evaluations. The forum served to promote evidence-based policymaking and highlight the importance of rigorous evaluation in program implementation and reform.
NEDA M&E Fund (2015)	Initially provided in the 2015 national budget to support the NEPF implementation. It aims to capacitate the NEDA to implement and manage evaluation as well as to enhance capacities of government agencies on monitoring and evaluation of priority programs and projects.	17 evaluation studies on infrastructure, agriculture, environmental protection and housing programs of the government have been completed. Other activities supported by the fund include the development of an information system for monitoring and evaluation of priority programs and projects and conduct of training workshops on impact evaluation. Challenges include low capacity of end-users in designing and managing conduct of studies; delays in procurement from failed biddings, which are usually due to the thin market of evaluation consultants and training service providers; unavailability of baseline/data and reference documents; difficulty in securing commitment from stakeholders with regard to ownership of evaluation outputs; poor performance of contractors and low quality of outputs; low access and dissemination of evaluation findings; uncertainty in the utilization of evaluation results; and difficulty in securing stakeholder acceptance of evaluation findings and acknowledgement of the independence of the evaluation process.

Strategic M&E Project (2017) - joint NEDA with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Aims to undertake capacity development activities for the NEDA and other government agencies towards a more effective evaluation of the country's national development plan and investment program.	Six evaluation studies were completed under the project. A competency assessment framework and toolkit for crafting the National Evaluation Agenda was also produced. The NEDA Central Evaluation Unit was created to carry out evaluation functions, demonstrate the importance and benefits of taking a more active role in the conduct and management of evaluation studies, and bring the level of focus and depth on the practice of evaluation at par with monitoring.
M&E Network Forum launched by NEDA in 2011.	Provide a venue for learning and knowledge sharing for sustained community of practice for evaluation practitioners within and outside government.	Since 2011, the forum has been held annually to complement and showcase capacity development efforts and contribute towards cultivating a community of practice on evaluation in the country. To date, a total of eight forums and 11 webinars have been conducted by the NEDA, with the assistance of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the UNDP.
Program Expenditure Classification of the Department of Budget and Management (2011)	Restructured the "line item" budgets of agencies.	Aligned outputs with budget spent that contributed to higher level organizational, sectoral and societal outcomes.
Administrative Order No. 25 (Created an Inter-Agency Task Force on the Harmonization of National Government Performance Monitoring, Information and Reporting Systems)	Harmonize, unify, streamline, and simplify all existing monitoring and reporting requirements and processes as embodied in the Results-Based Performance Management System.	
National Budget Circular No. 565 issued by the DBM in 2016 for the Adoption of a Results-Based Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (RBMER) Policy.	Strengthening, streamlining and standardizing the RBMER system evidenced by a timely, useful, accurate and credible reporting of performance information to support policy and program improvement, expenditure management, and local and national decision making.	

Regional program and project monitoring and evaluation	Purpose	Outcome
Regional Project Monitoring and Evaluation System (1989)	Serves as the primary institutional mechanism for program and project M&E of the government at the subnational level. M&E shifted from determining project efficiency and effectiveness towards determining the achievement of social and economic development objectives contributing to national development goals.	Efforts on initiating evaluations must catch up with efforts undertaken for monitoring. Since 2016, 15 evaluation studies on region-specific programs and projects were commissioned and completed under the NEDA administered M&E Fund, which is an annual appropriation in the national budget dedicated for the conduct of impact evaluations and other evaluation studies, among others.
Results-oriented medium-term development planning	Purpose	Outcome
Results Matrix or RM (2011)	Designed to provide results orientation to the PDP. Serves as guide in the planning, programming, and budgeting of implementing and oversight agencies, as well as enables the monitoring and evaluation of plan progress. It is intended to integrate all other results initiatives to help the government identify priority areas for development interventions and monitor progress in these areas.	The conduct of evaluations, as means of measuring and obtaining evidence on results derived from strategies and priority interventions laid out in the plan and the RM, is not yet apparent.

Sources: Cited in ^{24 25}

Leaving no one behind

The DSWD is one of the government agencies that underwent an evaluation process using the NEPF Guidelines. It noted that cohesive national development planning and programming is lacking.²⁶

The DSWD noted for instance the rolling out of the programs to achieve the 2030 Agenda of eradicating poverty and inequality. According to its report, unlike other countries, in the Philippines, the coordination of the 2030 Agenda was not led by a strong political authority like the President. Instead, the responsibility for ensuring political commitment and implementing the SDGs fell to the NEDA, which focused primarily on measuring the SDGs. It stressed the need for stronger political leadership, a unified vision for social protection, and a more integrated approach to planning and implementing the SDGs.²⁷

Challenges in Social Protection and SDG Implementation include (1) a lack of strong vision for social protection as a means to achieving the SDGs; correspondingly, (2) an absence of clear strategic direction for social protection posed challenges in ensuring inclusivity and in evaluating the impact of social protection policies and programs on achieving the SDGs; (3) the fragmented planning among implementing agencies resulted in a lack of coherence and synergy which undermined the overall effectiveness of social protection efforts; (4) some of the country's SDG indicators are overly programmatic and do not fully capture the essence and objectives of the SDGs.²⁸

The SDGs is yet to be fully embraced at the national level and localized on the ground to help eradicate poverty and inequality.

Transparency

What actions are partner countries and development partners taking to make development cooperation transparent?

The PDF was supposed to provide some transparency in reporting updates and outcomes of development cooperation. It has not convened since 2018. But even when it was operational in the previous years, there is an observation that very few CSOs are invited whilst the majority are financing institutions and private entities.

The ODA portfolio review does not elaborate on the status of implementation whilst the Commission on Audit does release reports per implementing agency. However, accessing detailed reports are not readily available nor readily provided when requested. Unless, when these are requested during the annual budget deliberations.

Upon consistent demands by CSOs and stakeholders in 2018, the Department of Finance has made available loan agreements on infrastructure projects.

Whole of society

To what extent are subnational governments, parliaments, CSOs, the private sector, foundations, and trade unions included in the development process?

How is everyone consulted and targeted in development cooperation? And is disaggregated data available to monitor progress?

A 2022 baseline study on the enabling environment for CSOs commissioned by Ibon International identified mechanisms and statutes in place for facilitating people's participation in development and governance. Below is an enumeration of these:

1. The country has various laws and statutes that ensure people's participation in development and governance. Among these, we have:

1. The 1987 Philippine Constitution, crafted supposedly to prevent a repeat of the authoritarian rule of then President Ferdinand Marcos, Sr., has guaranteed basic rights and freedoms of Filipinos including the right to form organizations or associations, state support for people's organizations, NGOs, community-based or sectoral organizations. The constitution also provides for the participation of party lists in the legislative branch of governance.
2. The 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines, which institutionalizes CSOs' participation in local development and policymaking through Local Development Councils (LDCs), as well as local government

units (LGUs) Special Bodies. Provinces, cities and municipalities, as well as barangays, have LDCs with CSOs serving three-year terms.

3. The 1990 Cooperative Code, Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992.

4. There exists the National Evaluation Policy Framework created through the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2015- 01 issued on 15 July 2015 that involves CSOs and other stakeholders in conducting independent evaluation of government programs and projects and in setting the overall policy direction of the public sector evaluation agenda.

2. *National executive agencies and civil society spaces include:*

1. The NEDA, which is the main economic and development policymaking agency in the Philippines. It is mandated to conduct multisectoral and regional consultations for inputs to the country's development plan. The agency is the focal agency in implementing international commitments such as Sustainable Development Goals and the effective development cooperation principles of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. The NEDA also leads the formulation of the Philippine Development Plan, which serves as the country's roadmap for national level development and likewise the SDGs. The NEDA's regional chapters - the regional development councils craft the region-wide development plans which are adopted for implementation by the LGUs.

2. The Department of Interior and Local Governance or DILG is responsible for promoting peace and order, ensuring public safety, and strengthening the capability of local government units to effectively deliver basic services to the citizenry.

3. The Department of Social Work and Development or DSWD provides accreditation for CSOs in the delivery of humanitarian services in disaster-stricken areas.

3. *There are also institutionalized mechanisms, to wit:*

1. The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) where 14 CSO basic sector representatives sit as members, together with key government officials. The NAPC is mandated to develop policy recommendations to address poverty and inequality.

2. The country is also a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) housed at the Department of Budget and Management. The OGP serves as a platform where multilateral initiatives converge to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to improve and strengthen governance.

3. Civil society engagement is also institutionalized in independent Constitutional Commissions, such as the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Audit.

The baseline study showed that grassroots-based CSOs that have existed for decades are actively engaging government from the national to the local government units (LGUs). Despite this, many are still red-tagged and discriminated against.

CSOs Consultations

Four consultations were done for the CSOs. Two were conducted online as a preparation for the actual face-to-face consultations, while the other two were in-person and hybrid consultations.

Invitations with an official invite letter duly signed by the stakeholders' focal persons, including the GPEDC PH National Coordinator, were sent with the relevant references including the Excel file of the monitoring tool provided by the NEDA.

As preparation for the workshops, the CPDG conducted an online orientation on the 4MR GPEDC and discussed the monitoring tools to be used.

The actual workshop consultations were organized by the CPDG and FFW, in partnership with the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER), the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), the PH Civil Society SDG Watch, with the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) and in cooperation with the NEDA and the GPEDC.

These were done on April 15 and 23, 2024. Using the GPEDC workshop tools, CSOs from among trade union federations and workers' institutions, along with CSO networks, shared their various contexts in deciding on the answers that best describe the current situation in development cooperation.

Thirty-eight CSOs participated in the April 15 and 23 consultations. Among which, ten were trade unions and workers' organizations. Meanwhile the Association of Foundations submitted answers from twenty of its members.



"Coming from a poor region challenged by attacks against CSOs and communities for asserting their right to development, it is crucial to monitor how this exercise will translate into tangible benefits like food security and improved livelihoods for poor and marginalized communities, and overall well-being. The significance of this process is to provide a venue to voice our concerns about our development work. Through this dual partnership of effective development cooperation, we can truly assess the impact and relevance of CSO services in relation to government actions or inactions".

- Jazmin Jerusalem



"As a reflection of modules 1-4, this consultation workshop serves as an excellent platform to contextualize our issues. Hopefully, decision-makers will hear us, and we can take action to improve the human rights situation in the country, including the economic, social, and cultural rights of the people." – Jazmin Jerusalem

In all, 58 CSOs, including workers' organizations and trade unions, participated in the 4MR GPEDC.

Ms. Jazmin Aguisanda-Jerusalem, Executive Director of the Leyte Center for Development and a sectoral representative of the National Anti-Poverty Council emphasized the importance of the monitoring exercise and the role of CSOs in enhancing inclusive, cooperative, and effective cooperation among development actors.

Ms. Rochelle Porras, EILER Executive Director and CPDG Vice President, reiterated the importance of the consultation, as this will be a tool to seek accountability, as a state and non-state holder involved in realizing the development agenda. We have a duty and responsibility in the realization of the development agenda. The state has the obligation to make the country's situation better. This is the root of the development agenda and development effectiveness principles.

Ms. Porras iterated that development effectiveness is a recognition that there are state and non-state actors for development. There are development partners and CSOs who are talking about development frameworks. The difference is that grassroots based CSOs are pushing a people-led and people-centered development framework. *"We will be internalizing how we express our experience on development work vis-a-vis development framework and development agenda set in the country. There is a necessity to deeply understand this development framework. At the same time, there is a chance using this consultation to share core experiences of development stakeholders involved and be part of forwarding the agenda on how to improve the access of various development mechanisms for the purposes of inclusivity and democracy."*

She added that the CPDG, together with other networks, had conducted training in development effectiveness. She hoped that the training would be expressed during this consultation and would be included in the Fourth Monitoring Round. She hoped to have a fruitful discussion and use the input and learnings to assert the important role of CSOs in a shrinking civic space.

Civic spaces remain constricted

While they noted the importance of the GPEDC monitoring exercise, CSOs highlighted the growing constraints on civic spaces despite government pledges to foster an enabling environment for effective civil society participation in development and governance. They expressed serious concern on how threats, harassment, enforced disappearances, and even extrajudicial killings have seemingly become normalized over the past five years.

CSOs shared their uneven experiences with mechanisms to enable the effective participation of CSOs and their stakeholders in policy development, implementation and in democratic governance. These mechanisms for development cooperation were very uneven and lacking.

On the CSOs enabling environment and development effectiveness

There was a difficulty in choosing the best answer, using the recommended characteristics of practice, to guide CSOs in selecting which level is most appropriate in providing the narrative for CSOs' EE and DE. They observed the inconsistency in the characteristics of practice and the questions asked, which caused confusion more than clarity. All agreed that the tool needs to be improved.

Module 1. Space for CSO dialogue on national development policies. This module has four questions.

1. On the question on whether CSOs are consulted in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies, CSOs agreed on choosing level 2 or level b – that there were occasional consultations, but the quality of consultation is not sufficient (with reference to full diversity of participation, agreed content, format allowing dialogue).

Trade unions are seldom invited while BPOs have not been invited. For the peasant sector, they feel excluded even when invited. They are outnumbered by the private sector or business representatives.

The representative from the BPO sector commented that it is the association of BPO companies that drafted the BPO code and that the BPO workers were not consulted.

The selection for invitation is not clear. Some felt that the process of inviting and the conduct of consultations are only for compliance. Consistency in the quality of the consultations and how meaningful these are can be improved to include more CSOs including people's organizations. Feedback has been noted to be insufficient and there is limited dissemination.

It is also observed that there is a lack of participation in councils and technical working groups, with only a few CSOs represented, neglecting sectors like PWDs and women, which should ideally be included.

2. On being consulted on the SDGs, yes, there exists an institutional mechanism which is the SDGs Stakeholders' Chamber but there is selectivity in participating stakeholders or in the selection process for membership to the chamber.

There are more private sector members than there are CSOs in the chamber. There is institutional space but CSOs' participation is very limited.

There is also an impression that only a few select CSOs may have been consulted on the SDGs and a call for national participation is unheard of. CSOs consulted may not adequately represent the sectors which they say they represent, especially those working at the grassroots level.

In essence, while there exists a mechanism or institution through the SDG Stakeholders' Chamber, the fact is that there is limited CSO participation.

The closest description on being consulted on the SDGs, including prioritization, implementation and monitoring, is level b or level 2. However, they qualified that the SDG mainstreaming is more at the national government agency level.

Integration of SDG planning, monitoring processes and regular assessments can be improved. This observation is supported by the LGUs. Much remains to be done in mainstreaming and localizing the SDGs.²⁹

The CSOs pointed that there is a need for clear targets and indicators in national plans, as well as their rollout at the national, local, and sectoral levels. While reporting is done based on indicators, they have not yet fully entered the government reporting system to support claims of mainstreaming.

A member of the stakeholders' chamber shared frustration in trying to integrate the SDGs into the Philippine Development Plan. There is a need for cascading and integration of the SDGs into line agencies. CSOs have a role in achieving this. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is an example where efforts have been made to integrate the SDGs in the labor and employment plan due to active campaigning by labor groups. Other agencies may not have similar efforts, particularly in the public sector.

Level 2 is achievable through meaningful consultations and processes involving CSOs.

3. On access to government data for effective participation in consultations with the government, there is a policy through an executive order by the previous administration but a Freedom of Information law is yet to be passed. The answer here is level 2 or b. There are many limitations to the data or information allowed for release to the public. In many cases, the information is not updated.

One has to comply with certain requirements imposed by government agencies that have control over the needed information. Timeliness on the release of the document is also a concern of those accessing the data. In addition, CSOs need to resort to their own validation and groundwork to get data that is closer to the current scenario.

Another observation is that the Data Privacy Act is being used as ground for not giving requested pertinent information. Inefficiencies in government is also a factor i.e., bureaucratic red tape.

Information is also provided in exchange for a fee, like information on corporations and their financial statements from the Securities and Exchange Commission, especially for trade unions needing these as basis for their collective bargaining agreements.

4. On the extent that the results of recent consultations with CSOs informed government design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies, the answer is level 2 or b. Only minor comments provided by CSOs through consultations at best are taken into account in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies. They agreed that (i) consultations with CSOs take place, but none or only minor comments are normally taken on board; (ii) in general, it is particularly difficult to ascertain how much of the CSOs' recommendations were taken on board; and (iii) the government does not respond to CSO papers.

Trade unions cited as an example the high-level tripartite committee report which showed there was a violation of freedom of association, a provision of the International Labour Organization Convention No.187, but the DOLE insisted this was "perceived" despite ample data presented. Trade unions recommended the formation of a presidential tripartite commission but what was established was an interagency committee.

There is very limited opportunity for CSOs to participate in the design and are usually just engaged in monitoring. Also cited as an example is the Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino Housing project of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development.

Module 2: On CSO development effectiveness - Accountability and transparency

1. On the question of the extent that partnerships are equitable and based on mutual interest between financing CSOs and their CSO partners, most CSOs experience short-term, often one-off, project relationships, which are sole expressions of the financing CSO's programming interests or level 1.

Although there are a number having longer term partnerships, these are occasional due to strict regulations from the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, making it challenging to maintain registration.

Many also cited receiving only donations and travel tickets without program funding.

Repressive policies, even from entities like churches, contribute to short-term crises and limit the capacity of CSOs to comply. International donors typically fund project-specific initiatives, and longer-term funding is usually project-based and focused on humanitarian or emergency responses.

There is also an observation that larger NGOs have localized their efforts. There is also competition even among NGOs that have localized their operations.

2. On the extent of CSOs' participation in CSO-initiated coordination, including mechanisms (e.g. platforms, networks, associations) that facilitate CSOs' engagement in policy dialogue and/or coordination among CSOs at the national or sectoral level, the discussion revolved around determining the appropriate level of CSO participation in mechanisms facilitating their engagement in policy dialogues, amidst challenges posed by shrinking civic spaces and governmental attacks. Participants expressed varying views, highlighting the need to balance acknowledgment of CSO efforts with the reality of hindrances such as attacks and limitations.

While some advocate for or prefer Level 4, others caution against overestimation and stress the importance of accurately reflecting the current environment under which CSOs operate. Concerns arise regarding the questionnaire's design and its alignment with the nuanced realities faced by CSOs. The question doesn't reflect levels 1 to 4. About participation in policy dialogue not translated into mechanisms, if we are good, it is Level 4. But the problem is due to the shrinking development space, does it influence policy? On the contrary, when there is injustice, there is resistance.

CSOs criticized the survey design for conflating two separate concepts and suggests that the question itself is flawed. The problem with the questionnaire's framing is flawed. To answer the question on the extent of CSOs' participation in those mechanisms that facilitate engagement, they do not because the CSOs are being attacked. Level 4, there are major platforms, but actively prevented because of the attacks. The bullet points are wrong. Level 4 on CSO participation, but CSOs are being attacked and prevented from participating in policies, and this needs to be stressed. The dilemma is that CSOs want to assert that there is a network or there are networks, but strongly point out that these are being hindered.

CSOs worry about having their answers misinterpreted as having a good enabling environment and their development effectiveness are being practiced. They are not choosing level 1 because there is a national platform advocating the Istanbul Principles for development effectiveness but in terms of engaging in dialogue, the answer is level 1.

Level 2 is also highly considered. CSO mechanisms and participation are intertwined. Despite the mechanisms for participation, the government's preference dictates the direction. To avoid playing up the strength and effort of CSOs, it could be level 2 but at the point of sitting based on the government's desires. The survey design fails to capture the nuanced reality, especially regarding CSO involvement and government interference. It highlights that there are CSOs, highlight the first part but disagree with that first point and the network doesn't work like that. The level 2 assessment is heavily qualified. There are networks but no involvement, they are being attacked. Concerns were raised on the discrepancy between actual participation and the perception of it, which describes an enabling environment, where does the shrinking of civic space fit in? Even if it is there at level 4, in answering Module 2, what is important is there should be a safe space for CSOs to operate. Many investments are being destroyed. How does it reflect in all modules?

While there are platforms in place, the government through its repressive policies interferes and limits its effectiveness. Despite a strong CSO presence, interference from the government keeps them at level 1 in terms of participation.

The consensus leaned towards level 2 or 3, with acknowledgment of the repressive context and the need for qualifications in scoring and statements.

Level 3 or C was ultimately chosen. There are many CSO-initiated coordination mechanisms both at the sectoral and national levels, according to the advocacies of CSOs towards improving their development effectiveness. And there is high participation from among CSOs in these platforms. But with a qualifier on the repressive environment and the government's interference hindering effective participation.

A statement is proposed suggesting Level 2 or 3 with qualifiers given the repressive environment.

3. On the extent of CSOs implementing their development work guided by international human rights standards and principles, e.g. human rights-based approaches?

The answer is level 3 or 4, there is evidence in practice. CSOs generally have policies and programs guided by international human rights standards and principles and there is evidence that most work in ways that institutionalize these policies to guide actual CSO external and internal practices.

4. On the extent of CSOs' alignment with CSO-led accountability mechanisms to address CSOs' transparency and multiple accountabilities, again the CSOs reflected that the corresponding choices and characteristics of practice do not match. How the question is framed is flawed and problematic.

In the Philippine setting, the Philippine Council for NGO Certification is an institution existing under the law, that is a CSO-initiated mechanism that polices the ranks of CSOs when it comes to transparency, accountability and good governance. There is also the CODE-NGO Code of Conduct. But evidence and/or documentation of alignment is not clearly established.

The CPDG and its members adopt the Istanbul Principles for Development Effectiveness.

Despite these, it is observed that mechanisms and systems in place are weaponized against CSOs, especially those critical of policies that compromise people's welfare.

No consensus was arrived at in answering this question.

Module 3: On Development cooperation with CSOs

1. To what extent do development partners consult CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of their development cooperation policies and programs?

There were three levels of answers. The cooperation varies with the orientation of development partners. With the traditional international financial institutions, like the unilateral aid giving agencies such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, there are token consultations. Unlike with rights-based UN organizations, i.e., International Labor Organization, there is meaningful consultation with CSOs. On the other hand, not all international development CSOs relate in the same cooperative manner with local CSOs.

There are consultations but the agenda are initiated by development partners. The local CSOs usually respond to development partners' calls for proposals but participation in the design and implementation of programs are limited. CSOs are invited to participate in reviewing country development plans of donor agencies but these opportunities are not widely publicized.

2. To what extent is the promotion of a CSO-enabling environment, e.g. political, financial, legal and policy aspects, an agenda item in development partners' policy dialogue with the government? Some development partners occasionally include some elements of the enabling environment agenda as an item in their policy dialogue with the government, particularly if CSOs lobby on specific issues. Many development partners seek to address the enabling environment for CSOs in their negotiations with the government regarding their development assistance, but this is not regularly part of dialogues.

3. On the extent of how development partner financial support is maximizing sustainable engagement of CSOs in all aspects of development, CSOs agreed on level 2, development partner funding mechanisms are predictable and transparent, but mainly focused on implementing their own programming priorities. There is limited access to funding for CSOs in partner countries. CSOs undergo several tedious processes to access funding.

4. On the extent of how development partners make information available about their CSO support to the public, including to the government, some development partners make available aggregate information on their support to CSOs at the country level.

Module 4: On legal and regulatory framework

1. On the extent of how the legal and regulatory framework enable CSOs to exercise the right of freedom of assembly in law and in practice, many peaceful assemblies are prohibited in law or practice. There are severe restrictions on assemblies which can take place only in government-designated areas.

2. On the extent of how the legal and regulatory framework enable CSOs to exercise the right of freedom of expression in law and in practice, expression by CSOs and their members is extensively controlled by the government, but some alternative media exist. Arbitrary arrests, threats and other actions against non-state actors are sometimes investigated. Laws and/or practice provide few effective safeguards against arbitrary surveillance. But it can also be that the expression of CSOs and their members, as well as news and internet media, are controlled or influenced by the government. CSO staff and journalists are also threatened, arbitrarily arrested, attacked, abducted, tortured or killed for exercising their freedom of expression. There is also surveillance and data collection on CSOs and individuals, and repressive laws and regulations facilitate this practice.

3. On the extent of how the legal and regulatory framework enables in law and practice CSO formation, registration and operation, it is restrictive. Registration is mandatory, difficult, lengthy, costly and required periodically exacting precious time, effort and financial resources from CSOs. This is especially restrictive for small CSOs and people's organizations.

4. On the extent of how CSOs working with vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population and at-risk groups are effectively protected from discrimination, CSOs working with vulnerable and marginalized groups have some legal protection, but these are applied inconsistently, with few, if any, administrative or juridical recourse.

However, there are many activities of CSOs working with vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population being monitored by state forces through the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict or NTF-ELCAC. There is a broad culture of impunity for illegal threats and actions against CSOs working with vulnerable and marginalized groups.

5. On the extent of how the legal and regulatory environment facilitates access to resources for domestic CSOs, the access to either national or international resources is possible, but is subject to government restrictions.

Conclusion

It is important to trace back development effectiveness from 2010, when the concept first emerged, and the core principles regarding CSOs' engagement. With the current constraints on space and funding, the challenges faced by CSOs should be seriously considered and addressed by the government and development partners among international institutions and partners.

There should be political will on the part of the government to truly enable civic spaces for genuine people's participation in governance and development. Democratic governance is key.

CSO platforms for engagement should be utilized wisely and maximized, setting aside differences in political beliefs and putting primacy on the common goal of attaining genuine people-centered development towards eradicating poverty and inequality.

Speaking the truth is important. And as truth tellers, CSOs should speak on any platform. Despite feeling disheartened at times, the sacrifices made by many for the genuine cause of liberating Filipinos from political repression and impoverishment should be an inspiration for development CSOs, NGOs and people's organizations to persevere in their efforts to practice their development effectiveness and claim their rights as development actors contributing to national development and the overall goal of achieving Agenda 2030 and leaving no one behind.

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As part of the commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is essential to have the active participation of civil society in the monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This report presents the results of a civil society consultation specifically designed to gather contextual information on the progress of the SDGs. The consultation was carried out through a survey addressed to various civil society organizations (CSOs), allowing for a comprehensive and detailed view of the achievements, challenges and needs in the implementation of the SDGs. For the purposes of this 4th round of monitoring, the focus is on SDGs 5, 16 and 17.

The purpose of the consultation is multiple:

- 1. Obtain contextual data:** Collect qualitative and quantitative information that reflects the current situation in different areas relevant to enabling environments for CSOs and development effectiveness (SDGs 16 and 17).
- 2. Identify challenges and opportunities:** Understand the obstacles faced by CSOs in implementing the SDGs, as well as identify good practices and opportunities for improvement.
- 3. Strengthen collaboration:** Promote greater cooperation and dialogue between government, CSOs and other key stakeholders to align efforts and resources to achieve the SDGs.
- 4. Propose recommendations:** Based on the survey findings, develop concrete recommendations to improve implementation and monitoring strategies for the SDGs assessed.

The survey used corresponds to the Global Policy Agenda for Development (AGPED) monitoring questionnaire that covers various aspects, including CSOs' perception of the SDG progress, the main challenges they face, and the areas in which they require further support. In addition, CSOs were asked to share examples of good practices and proposals to strengthen SDG implementation.

The results of this consultation provide a basis for understanding the current context and designing more effective and collaborative strategies. This report not only documents key findings, but also reflects the voices and experiences of CSOs, highlighting their indispensable role in building sustainable and inclusive development.

Through this monitoring exercise, we reaffirm our commitment to transparency, inclusiveness and effectiveness in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that policies and actions are based on data and perspectives from those directly involved on the ground.

Methodology

In order to carry out the 4th Monitoring Round of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Honduras, a methodology has been designed that covers various aspects. Although there is a roadmap that establishes the stages of the process, at the time of writing this report the government is in the information gathering stage.

In light of this situation, our organization has carried out consultations with community and civil society organizations in 10 departments of Honduras.

Our methodological approach includes the use of the monitoring questionnaire provided by the Global Policy Agenda for Development (AGPED), as well as literature review and semi-structured interviews. These activities have allowed us to collect relevant data for the analysis.

The key components of our methodology are described below:

- 1. Contact with the government focal point:** We established direct and constant contact with the government focal point in charge of monitoring the SDGs. This collaboration has allowed us to receive guidance and support in the information gathering process.
- 2. Consultations with community and civil society organizations:** We conducted extensive consultations with a wide range of community and civil society organizations in different departments of Honduras. These consultations have provided us with valuable insights and input on the implementation of the SDGs at the local level.
- 3. Use of the AGPED monitoring questionnaire:** We used the monitoring questionnaire provided by AGPED to collect specific data related to the SDG indicators. This approach has allowed us to standardize the information collected and facilitate its comparative analysis.
- 4. Literature review:** We conducted a comprehensive review of relevant literature and documents related to the SDGs in Honduras. This review has provided us with a broad and updated context on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the SDGs in the country.
- 5. Semi-structured interviews:** We conducted interviews with key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the SDGs in Honduras, such as government representatives, thematic experts and community leaders. These interviews allowed us to obtain more detailed and qualitative information on different aspects of implementation.

Once the data was collected, we proceeded to analyze the information obtained, with the objective of preparing a comprehensive report that reflects the current situation and recommendations to improve the preparation and progress of the SDGs in Honduras.

Context

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015 at a historic United Nations summit, officially came into force on January 1, 2016.¹ The 17 objectives propose a series of actions to be implemented by governments in the search for the well-being of citizens in the countries.

Goal 16 calls for "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" implies that States should strengthen their institutions, create laws, policies and other necessary instruments to guarantee the enjoyment of citizens' rights. It promotes the establishment of peaceful and inclusive societies, encourages the adoption of measures that guarantee the protection of people most at risk, finds lasting solutions to conflicts and the climate of insecurity, and demands the strengthening of the rule of law, the promotion of human rights, and the fight against corruption.

The mandate is not only for governments. It demands joint work between civil society and the community. The objective is to promote societies where individual rights are respected and defended, such as the right to privacy, freedom of expression, access to information and equal justice. It reaffirms the right of children to live free from violence, promotes inclusive processes, without exception of persons based on ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation. It urges societies to demand accountability from their officials and the responsibility of institutions in guaranteeing the well-being of society.

In their report published on March 15, 2024, InSight Crime, an organization that investigates the actions of organized crime, describes the guilty verdict handed down to former President Juan Orlando Hernández on March 8 of the same year, during which it became clear how criminal organizations permeated state institutions in order to operate with total impunity.

The same organization interviewed Mr. Lester Ramirez, professor at the Central American Technological University (UNITEC) and researcher for the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC).² He said, "Legally, it will always be difficult to prosecute politicians in Honduras. We don't have the institutional capacity or the judicial independence to make prosecutions like this possible. This shows that it is not easy for the current government to guarantee justice, peace and security to the citizenry since many of the current officials continue to collude with criminal gangs including tax evasion.

1 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/peace-justice/>

2 <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/peace-justice/>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), in its report on the human rights situation in Honduras for the second half of 2023, describes the country context: “Violence and insecurity continue to affect the country. According to official sources, the homicide rate registered a decrease of approximately 17% with respect to the previous year, going from 38.2 in 2022 to 31.14 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2023, mainly by firearm (74.8% of cases). However, 380 deaths were recorded, violent deaths of women, representing an increase of 24.2% over 2024.”³

This report makes clear the atmosphere of violence in which Honduran society is immersed and the inability or unwillingness of the authorities to address the genesis of the problem, although in paragraph 4 of the same report, speaking of the context, they also recognize the efforts and political will of the government for dialogue aimed at combating it.

On the other hand, the national media have published reports of evictions and repression by the National Police, especially in the north and center of the country, Tegucigalpa, against families⁴ who are part of land recovery processes, asserting their right to their land. The OHCHR also expresses its concern in this regard.⁵

Sustainable Development Goal 17

Partnerships for achieving the goals is an essential component of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. This goal underscores the importance of strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. SDG 17 is based on the premise that global, national and local cooperation between governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders is essential to achieve the other 16 SDGs.

Strengthening of resources

One of the pillars of SDG 17 is to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available to achieve the SDGs. It involves mobilizing domestic and external financial resources, including Official Development Assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment and remittances. It is also crucial to improve tax collection capacity in developing countries to ensure sustainable and equitable financing.

³ <https://oacnudh.hn/19-de-marzo-oacnudh-presenta-informe-anual-sobre-la-situacion-de-derechos-humanos-in-honduras-2023/>

⁴ <https://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/miles-empleos-pierden-invasiones-tierra-MA19918361>

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Technology transfer

International cooperation in science, technology and innovation is another vital component of SDG 17. Facilitating access to clean and sustainable technologies, as well as promoting technology and knowledge transfer, are key strategies to help developing countries effectively implement the SDGs.

Training and capacity building

Capacity development in developing countries is essential for the implementation of the SDGs. This includes strengthening institutions and equipping people with the skills needed to formulate and implement effective policies. International partnerships can provide the training and technical support needed to improve the infrastructure and administrative capacities of these countries.

Trade and the global financial system

SDG 17 also highlights the need for a fair, open and adequately regulated international trading and financial system. Eliminating the trade barriers and improving the stability of the global financial system are essential steps to ensure that all countries, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, can benefit from global trade and access international markets.

Inclusive and multisectoral alliances

The goal promotes inclusive partnerships at all levels. This includes partnerships between governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure that actions to achieve the SDGs are coherent, integrated and sustainable. Partnerships must be based on shared principles and values, as well as a common vision and goals that put people and the planet at the center.

There is still a high level of distrust on the part of society towards public institutions, which jeopardizes cohesion and the social contract. Social dissatisfaction with public services is even greater for the poor and vulnerable population, such as indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, people with disabilities, and people with mobility problems, because they cannot access better quality services, which are generally more expensive and are provided by the private sector.⁶

⁶ <https://honduras.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Marco%20Desarrollo%20Sostenible%20Naciones%20Unidas%20para%20el%20Desarrollo%20Sostenible%20%7C%20Honduras%202022%20-%202026.pdf>

Monitoring and accountability

Finally, SDG 17 underscores the importance of monitoring and accountability. It is essential to establish transparent and effective mechanisms to monitor progress towards the SDGs. This involves the collection of reliable and disaggregated data, as well as the implementation of accountability systems to assess progress and adjust strategies as necessary.

Conclusion

Sustainable Development Goal 17 recognizes that no single entity can achieve sustainable development alone. Strong and effective collaboration and partnerships are essential to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and ensure a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for all. By working together, countries and organizations can share knowledge, resources and experiences, thereby maximizing the impact of their collective efforts in the fight against poverty, inequality and climate change.

Civil society uses this mechanism, the Alliances, as a strategy to have a stronger influence on decision makers by presenting their demands in the formulation of public policies and in the resolution of their problems. It is noticeable and some sectors, such as the indigenous people, peasants, and women, recognize that there is greater openness to dialogue in the current government. And even through the media, there have been several expressions of manifestations and demands, to which the authorities have listened and responded.

Civil society organizations, such as ASONOG and World Vision, working on the issue of displacement, are part of the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Displaced Persons (CIPPDEF), in which civil society and government institutions participate and which is responsible for implementing Decree 154- 2022 on the protection of displaced persons with the use of three instruments: regulations for the implementation of the law, internal regulations for the operation of the CIPPDEF and National Protection Policy for forcibly displaced persons, the role of both ASONOG and WV, is to articulate efforts of civil society to participate and contribute to the processes.

The Secretariat of Social Development (SEDESOL) has a Public Policy Unit; this Unit carries out its work through consultation processes for the generation of policies; the consultations include the civil society and government sectors, the openness to work together is highlighted. Although the alliances go beyond what is described, it cannot be denied that both government and civil society entities yearn for the instruments to be legally recognized, and this is where the concept of alliances is included.⁷

⁷ Alliances can be between related entities, especially used between civil society and unions. With this practice it is demonstrated that alliances can also be made with some public officials to achieve the objectives. In the cases mentioned above, officials have been lobbied who will present the documents to their colleagues. Alliances are made de facto and do not necessarily require a written document to formalize them, although this would be ideal.

An example in which there is no agreement between the government and the Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP), is the approval of the Tax Justice Law, a law that according to Sammy Castro, PhD in Economics and university professor at the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH), is a proposal that seeks to correct processes through which abuses have been committed. The main opponent to the approval of this law is COHEP. In this case there is no understanding, no consensus, no common objectives, therefore there is no alliance for its approval.

Status of 4MR topics

Module I. Space for CSO dialogue on national development policies

In this Sustainable Development Goals monitoring report, we have assessed the enabling environment for civil society organizations and development effectiveness, focusing especially on Module I, which addresses the space for dialogue with CSOs on national development policies. In relation to government consultation with CSOs when designing, implementing and monitoring national development policies, the results obtained show the following distribution in the selected sample:

- 55% of respondents indicated that there have been no consultations in the last two years.
- 22% of the responses reflected that there are frequent consultations of mixed quality.
- 23% of the responses revealed that consultations are occasional, but the quality of the consultations is not sufficient.

These findings underscore the need to improve the level of consultation and dialogue between government and CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies. The lack of regular and adequate quality consultation jeopardizes the inclusion of diverse perspectives and the promotion of constructive dialogue among relevant stakeholders.

In order to move towards a more favorable and effective environment for the implementation of the SDGs, the following recommendations are made:

Promote regular and institutionalized consultation: It is essential that the government establishes formal and regular consultation mechanisms that involve CSOs in all stages of the process of designing, implementing and monitoring national development policies.

Ensure diversity of participation: It is essential to promote inclusive CSO participation, ensuring representation of different social groups, marginalized communities and relevant stakeholders in consultations. This will allow a wide range of perspectives and experiences to be incorporated into decision making.

Improve the quality of consultations: Consultations need to be meaningful and effective, fostering an open and constructive dialogue. This implies establishing a clear agenda, agreeing on relevant issues and using modalities that facilitate the exchange of ideas and constructive feedback.

Strengthen CSO capacity: It is important to provide support and resources to CSOs to strengthen their capacities to participate in consultation processes. This may include training, access to relevant information and financial resources for their effective participation.

Establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms: Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that consultations are translated into concrete actions and that commitments made are fulfilled. This will help increase transparency and accountability in the SDG implementation process.

It is critical to emphasize that effective consultation and dialogue with CSOs is key to achieving sustainable development and progress towards the SDGs. Strengthening collaboration between government and CSOs will promote participatory governance and ensure the inclusion of all voices in decision-making.

This report is intended to serve as a tool to inform and guide efforts to implement the SDGs, and emphasizes the importance of promoting an enabling environment that fosters the active participation of CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to what extent does the government consult CSOs when prioritizing, implementing and monitoring the SDGs?

The results of this question in the survey reflect a variety of experiences and perceptions among the participating CSOs:

Lack of formal consultation (43%): A significant percentage of CSOs indicate that a formal consultation process on the SDGs has not yet been initiated in the country, suggesting an urgent need to establish formal mechanisms for engagement.

Occasional and selective consultations (19%): A smaller group of CSOs report being consulted occasionally, indicating a lack of consistency and a possible tendency to select only certain CSOs for consultation, thus limiting inclusiveness and representativeness.

Ad hoc processes (28%): Nearly one third of CSOs mention that they participate in ad hoc consultation processes. While this represents progress, it highlights the need to institutionalize these processes to ensure more structured and constant collaboration.

Institutionalized consultation (10%): Only a minority of CSOs indicate that there is formal, institutionalized consultation in line with good consultation practices, suggesting that positive but insufficient steps are being taken towards more effective and systematic collaboration.

Civil society consultation has revealed both progress and significant areas for improvement in the process of government's engagement of CSOs in the prioritization, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. While some consultation efforts exist, there is a clear need to develop and institutionalize more inclusive and consistent mechanisms to ensure that all civil society voices are heard and considered.

Recommendations

Development of formal mechanisms: Establish institutionalized procedures for regular and effective CSO consultation.

Increasing inclusion: Broaden the participation of a diversity of CSOs, ensuring that consultations are representative and equitable.

Strengthening continuous dialogue: Create permanent platforms for dialogue and collaboration between government and civil society.

Module II. CSO development effectiveness: transparency and accountability

Transparency

The results derived from the questions in this section indicate that, although long-term programmatic partnerships exist between national and funder CSOs, these relationships are often predominantly defined by the interests of the funder CSOs. This can lead to unbalanced dynamics where the needs and priorities of partner CSOs are not always fully considered or integrated.

They also show a diversity in the effectiveness and origin of coordination mechanisms among CSOs. While some sectors have coordination mechanisms, these are often influenced by the interests of development partners or national governments, which can limit the representativeness and effectiveness of such mechanisms.

CSO coordination mechanisms exist in a few sectors, but they are mainly based on the interests of development partners or national governments in these sectors.

However, at both sectoral and national levels, there are different CSO-initiated coordination mechanisms based on national CSO interests to improve development effectiveness.

Implications

- **Imbalance of power:** Defining relationships based on the interests of funding CSOs suggests an imbalance of power, where partner CSOs may have less ability to influence project direction and priorities.
- **Dependency:** This dynamic can generate a dependency of national CSOs on the funds and decisions of funders, limiting their autonomy and capacity for independent action.
- **Opportunities to improve equity:** Fostering more equitable and participatory discussions where the needs of both parties are considered can strengthen equity in these partnerships.
- **Limited representativeness:** The lack of a representative CSO-initiated integrative platform suggests a need for more inclusive and equitable structures for coordination.
- **Sectoralization of coordination:** The existence of coordination mechanisms in certain sectors indicates potential fragmentation and the need for greater cohesion and representativeness at the national level.
- **Potential for improvement:** Encouraging the creation of representative platforms initiated and managed by CSOs can improve coordination, representation and development effectiveness.

The survey results reflect significant challenges in the equity of alliances between funding and partner CSOs, and in the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms among CSOs. Despite some progress, there is a clear need to promote more equitable and participatory practices in both areas. Fostering dialogue and collaboration between CSOs and funders, as well as supporting the creation of more inclusive and representative coordination platforms, are key steps towards greater effectiveness and sustainability in SDG implementation.

Accountability

According to the responses obtained, CSOs have developed norms and codes of conduct that promote accountability and transparency. However, the lack of formal procedures and adequate training limits the effectiveness of these mechanisms. Transparency is enhanced through the publication of organizational information on their websites, but practical implementation and enforcement of these standards is inconsistent.

Nevertheless, the results show a wide range of practices and levels of development in terms of accountability and transparency among CSOs. Although there are notable efforts to improve these aspects, it is clear that greater efforts are needed to institutionalize and strengthen accountability and transparency mechanisms.

- **Imbalance and variability:** The lack of formal and nationally accepted mechanisms in many CSOs suggests a significant imbalance in accountability and transparency practices.
- **Ongoing efforts:** CSOs are actively discussing and working to improve their practices, but need support and formalization of these mechanisms.
- **Standards and codes without formal enforcement:** The existence of standards and codes without formal compliance procedures indicates a gap between theory and practice.
- **Ideal mechanisms:** CSOs that have succeeded in establishing robust and representative mechanisms serve as models for the rest of the community.

Module III. Development cooperation with CSOs

The results of the responses obtained in this section signify the following:

Frequent and coordinated consultations: This indicates that development partners regularly consult with a variety of CSOs and suggests a conscious effort by donors to involve CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of development cooperation policies and programs.

CSO diversity: The consultation is not limited to a few selected CSOs, but encompasses a diversity of organizations. This promotes a broader representation of voices and perspectives within the program development and implementation process.

Non-exclusivity in program implementation: It is noted that consultations are not exclusively focused on the implementation of specific donor programs. This implies that consultations could also address broader issues related to development policies, sector strategies and other relevant aspects.

Agenda setting by donors: Despite frequent consultations, the option indicates that the predominant agenda and priorities are mostly defined by development partners. This suggests that, although consultations are present, the decisive influence on strategic direction and policy setting still rests primarily with donors.

Implications and considerations:

- **Inclusiveness and representativeness:** Consultation with a diversity of CSOs is positive to ensure that multiple perspectives and needs are considered in program design and implementation.
- **Limitations on CSO autonomy:** Although widely consulted, agenda setting by donors can limit the autonomy and capacity of local CSOs to influence strategic decisions.

- **Importance of the consultative process:** Although donors set the agenda, the consultative process can help improve the relevance and effectiveness of interventions by incorporating local knowledge and experiences of CSOs.

It reflects an approach where CSO consultations are a frequent and coordinated practice among development partners, although final decisions are still largely determined by donors. This dynamic underscores the importance of strengthening mechanisms for effective CSO consultation and participation in the design and monitoring of development cooperation policies and programs.

Module IV. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The responses reflect an environment where, in general, CSOs are able to exercise the right to freedom of assembly both in law and in practice. However, the potential for discrimination in decision-making highlights the continuing need to monitor and address any discriminatory barriers that may arise in the application of this fundamental right.

- **Implementation Gaps:** Although meetings are permitted in theory, discrimination in decision-making can effectively limit the ability of certain groups to exercise this right fully and effectively.

Lessons and challenges

Lessons

- **Importance of dialogue and consultation:** Effective consultation and dialogue with CSOs is fundamental to achieving sustainable development and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. These actions allow a wide range of perspectives and experiences to be incorporated into decision-making, which enriches the implementation of national development policies.
- **Need for formal mechanisms:** The survey results indicate that a significant percentage of CSOs point to the lack of formal consultation by the government. This highlights the importance of establishing institutionalized and regular consultation mechanisms to ensure the inclusion and active participation of CSOs in all stages of the SDG-related policy design, implementation and monitoring process.
- **Promote diversity and representativeness:** It is essential to ensure the inclusive participation of CSOs, including different social groups, marginalized communities and relevant stakeholders in consultations. This will help ensure more equitable decision-making and address needs and challenges more effectively.

Challenges

- The results show that a large proportion of the responses reflect the absence of consultations in the last two years, or occasional consultations of insufficient quality. This represents a major challenge, as it limits the inclusion of diverse perspectives and the development of a constructive dialogue among relevant stakeholders.
- Although it is mentioned that some CSOs are occasionally consulted, there is concern that the selection of CSOs may be limited and does not adequately reflect the diversity of civil society. This highlights the need to broaden participation and ensure equitable representation in consultation processes.
- While some progress has been made in terms of ad hoc consultations, there is a need to institutionalize these processes to ensure more structured and ongoing collaboration. This implies establishing formal and permanent mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration between government and civil society.

In summary, the lessons learned from this report indicate the importance of strengthening consultation and dialogue between government and CSOs in the context of the SDGs. The challenges identified highlight the need to establish formal mechanisms, promote inclusiveness, and improve the quality of the consultations. These efforts will contribute to creating a more enabling and effective environment for the implementation of the SDGs and the achievement of sustainable development.

Conclusion and next steps

To effectively institutionalize consultation processes with civil society on the sustainable development goals, governments can take the following specific steps:

- Governments can enact laws, policies and regulations that ensure civil society participation in SDG-related decision-making. These legal and policy frameworks should establish the rights and responsibilities of CSOs and formal consultation mechanisms.
- It is essential to establish permanent spaces for dialogue and collaboration between government and civil society. These spaces can be in the form of committees, councils or multi-stakeholder platforms where issues related to the SDGs are discussed. These spaces should be inclusive, allowing the participation of CSOs from different sectors and groups of society.
- It is important to establish clear roles and responsibilities for both government and civil society in consultation processes. This involves defining the roles of each party, the thematic areas of consultation, timelines and expectations. Establishing these clear guidelines will help avoid confusion and ensure effective participation.

- Governments should ensure transparency in consultation processes, sharing relevant information and providing access to relevant documents and decisions. In addition, accountability of both government and CSOs should be promoted, ensuring that the opinions and recommendations of civil society are taken into account and that there is adequate follow-up on commitments made.
- Governments can invest in building the capacity of CSOs and other relevant stakeholders to effectively participate in consultation processes. This involves providing training, resources and technical support to strengthen skills in areas such as policy formulation, data analysis and effective communication.
- It is important to conduct periodic evaluations of consultation processes to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Governments should be willing to receive feedback and make adjustments to consultation mechanisms as needed. This will improve the quality and effectiveness of civil society participation in the implementation of the SDGs.

Strategies from Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations can adopt various strategies to participate more effectively in the consultation processes on the Sustainable Development Goals. Some specific strategies are:

- CSOs can invest in strengthening their internal capacities. This involves developing skills in areas such as policy formulation, data analysis, strategic communication and negotiation. By improving their technical and organizational capacity, CSOs will be better prepared to participate effectively in consultation processes.
- CSOs can seek alliances and network with other relevant organizations and stakeholders. Working in collaboration with other CSOs and stakeholders increases the capacity for collective influence and enables the sharing of resources and knowledge. In addition, alliances and networks can provide a platform for coordination and exchange of good practices.
- It is important for CSOs to actively participate in the spaces for dialogue and consultation established by the government and other relevant actors. This involves getting involved in committees, councils, multi-stakeholder platforms or other similar mechanisms where policies and actions related to the SDGs are discussed. Active participation in these spaces allows CSOs to contribute their perspectives and recommendations.
- CSOs can generate solid evidence and data to support their positions and recommendations. This involves conducting research, collecting relevant data, and analyzing the information to support their arguments. Having data-based evidence strengthens the position of CSOs and increases their credibility in consultation processes.

- Effective communication is key for CSOs to participate more effectively in consultation processes. CSOs should develop clear communication strategies tailored to different audiences. This includes developing key messages, using appropriate media, and participating in relevant events to disseminate their ideas and proposals.
- CSOs should continuously monitor consultation processes and follow up on agreed decisions and commitments. This involves keeping informed about progress, participating in the implementation of policies and programs, and holding decision-makers accountable. Monitoring and follow-up allow CSOs to ensure that their contributions are taken into account and translated into concrete actions.

By adopting these strategies, civil society organizations can participate more effectively in consultation processes on the SDGs. This will enable them to have an impact on decision-making, promote positive change and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Multi-stakeholder Consultation on 4MR Engagement in Cameroon for Development Effectiveness: Joining forces locally to achieve measurable and lasting results

As part of its mandate and responsibilities under the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), Cameroon participated in the fourth round of effectiveness monitoring (4MR) in 2023, following similar country exercises in 2014, 2016 and 2018.¹ A national validation workshop on the Roadmap of the Action Dialogue for Effective Development Cooperation, conducted by the Ministry of Planning, Economy, Planning and Regional Development (MINEPAT), was held in December 2021 in the capital, Yaoundé. Attended by key stakeholders, the meeting led to several recommendations and observations² being noted for more fruitful partnerships working to maximize development impact for meaningful progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation, spurred at the global level by the United Nations Agenda 2030.³ Suggested avenues on the way forward mirrored the long-standing advocacy orientations of local civil society regarding greater involvement of its actors in the management of public affairs⁴, similarly echoed in Cameroon's Action Dialogue concept note which highlighted the direct correlation between effective partnerships and better and faster results.⁵

Across health, agriculture, education and other sectors, against a background of complex crises redirecting the country's resources to prolonged urgencies⁶, the development needs of Cameroon – identified in its National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30)⁷ – indeed, cannot be met in isolation. Our biggest structural projects, such as the building of roads and dams, require the ready and optimal engagement of development partners; our socioeconomic challenges, although sector-specific, must be addressed in a coordinated approach and their solutions, data-driven and locally-targeted, as part of an ongoing decentralization process that comes with its own challenges.⁸ As a case in point, where figures estimate that 37.5% of the population lives below the poverty line, in some regions this rises to 70%⁹, with poverty affecting over half, or 51.5%, of women.¹⁰ The importance of locally-sensitive data hence cannot be overstated. On this depends the mobilization of appropriate resources and the effective allocation of the same, without which many Cameroonians will be left behind.

The current whole-of-country and decentralized approach to governance has seen a concentration of efforts on establishing an Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF)¹¹ designed to support the US\$ 61 billion cost of implementation of the NDS30.¹² A progress check on the three SDG targets of which GPEDC is the official source¹³, as assessed under the 4MR stakeholder accountability framework with which Cameroon is aligned and which is bound to shape the INFF, is thus critical for many reasons outlined below:

SDG 17.15: Respect each country's policy space and leadership. The voluntary nature of the framework should not warrant a deceleration of efforts. Early and sustained engagement of all partners is crucial if Cameroon is to achieve the objectives of its vision of economic emergence and minimal poverty in the next decade (Vision 2035).

SDG 17.16: Multi-stakeholder partnerships for development. Despite a long history of partnership building, Cameroon's performance shows stagnancy on this front. Lack of coordination of efforts toward the delivery of national development priorities, often deplored in the past, still threatens the efficacy of SDG financing and implementation today.

SDG 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Development cooperation has been critical to progress in this area, of which one the biggest milestones relates to the introduction of gender-sensitive indicators in the 2021 State Budget and the consolidation of this work in subsequent budgetary cycles.¹⁴ Significant obstacles persist nonetheless, including low dedicated financial and human resources, gender data gaps, the persistence of patriarchy and harmful norms, and the increasing humanitarian needs.¹⁵

Rationale

The Multi-stakeholder Consultation served as a lever for garnering participant views and perspectives on the functioning and efficacy of Cameroon's core systems for development cooperation, such as Multi Partners Committee and the United Nations Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development (UNSDCF) Steering Committee, among others. Participant discussions cover four main areas of analysis, namely:

- The extent to which subnational governments, parliaments, civil society organizations, the private sector, foundations, and trade unions are included in the development process
- The state of Cameroon's core systems for development cooperation and how development partners align with and use them
- Actions taken by Cameroon and development partners to make development cooperation transparent
- The choice of participants and modalities of development cooperation consultative processes at the national and local levels and the quality of data available to monitor progress

Technical works

The Consultation, which was held on April 15, 2024 at Tou'ngou hotel in Yaoundé began with introductory words from the COSADER Chair, Mrs. Christine Andela, who underscored the importance of partners' and public authorities' attendance whose actions are complementary in the national development cooperation framework. Mrs. Andela then reminded participants of key development cooperation principles, namely: Focus on results, effective development partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability.



Opening session

The opening session was led by MINEPAT Representative, Mr. LAO, who provided background and contextual elements for the meeting, reminding participants of the history of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) and outlining the main result expectations, in particular: Inclusion of all stakeholders in the development process, partnership alignment on national priorities, concrete action from partners and the government supporting greater transparency in development cooperation, and due consideration for civil society's perspectives on the evolution of the Global Partnership. Mr LAO subsequently discussed Cameroon's Roadmap, pertaining to the underlying process, noting that the national GPEDC monitoring report was currently unavailable. Participants also learned that the Roadmap is accessible from the Global Partnership's website.



Several preoccupations and concerns emerged following these statements, including around planning and coordination of development cooperation actions, the current debt situation within development cooperation, management of humanitarian aid, the aid architecture and the challenges to overcome and opportunities to seize in development cooperation.

This was followed by further participants' discussions that centered on three themes:

- Alignment of development cooperation work on national priorities
- Transparency and accountability in development cooperation in Cameroon
- Data for development cooperation

Key takeaways

The main discussion points to have emerged from the session can be summarized as follows:

1. Alignment of development cooperation work on national priorities

Highlighted in this part of the session was the importance of Cameroonian development actors having policy expertise to better promote national interests in dialogue frameworks with donors. This stemmed from participants' general feeling of donors not always aligning with country policies, favoring instead such actions that support and are geared toward their own objectives.

2. Transparency and accountability in Cameroonian development cooperation

During this session, it was noted that transparency and accountability in development cooperation are not a given in Cameroon and that they should be built through continuous stakeholder engagement.

Issues around traceability of development funding were also said to be an obstacle to more meaningful contributions from civil society whose accountability reports on subsidies programmes and informed advice on trends in subsidies and other forecasts were sought after. Due to their negative impact on actors' credibility, several shortcomings were identified in civil society's internal governance. Most notably: lack of coordination, low level of exigency, issues relating to instauring a culture of accounts management and effective financial reporting.

3. Usable data for development cooperation

Discussions on data were particularly engaging, in large part due to participants agreeing that planning of development action is contingent upon sound data collection practices. It was subsequently acknowledged that gathering usable data comes with a lot of difficulties, either owing to the absence of required mechanisms, or lack of investment in data collection, more generally. Nevertheless, participants noted Cameroon as having strong data management capabilities which need to be fully exploited.



Mr LAO, MINEPAT Representative in GPEDC

Next steps

In terms of further engagement, specific commitments were made, including by the European Union, who promised to monitor transparency and accountability in citizens' access to budget information and Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability reports¹⁶. Next, the Ministry of Finance/MINFI assured participants of its continuous engagement in the strengthening of civil society capacities. For its part, the GIZ affirmed its willingness to continue to support civil society initiatives and to be more sensitive to requests around the same.

The statement of the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family/ MINPROFF, meanwhile, focused on the strengthening of civil society capacities in gender issues and actor buy-in toward gender sensitive budgeting. Similarly, attending the session under the gender banner, the Gender Group also underscored the importance of consolidating GSB, creating a center of gender excellence and sensitizing communities on gender issues.

Concluding on this section, the MINEPAT requested, on the one hand, the reprisal of work around a structured civil society framework and the continuation of GIZ support and on the other hand, the invitation extended to the production by civil society of themed reports on development cooperation in Cameroon.



Members of the Gender Group

Key progress indicators show moderate advances in Cameroon's SDG 5 implementation. Due to major challenges remaining, the country is unlikely to meet gender equality targets.¹⁷

Closing session

Discussions ended on a positive note, with MINEPAT Representative Mr. LAO keen on expressing his satisfaction on the conduct of the event and saluting stakeholders' active participation during the talks. Words of gratitude were also expressed to the event organizers, and the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) as facilitating partner.



Multi-stakeholder Consultation family photo

Cameroonian Civil Society Caucus on 4MR Effective Engagement: building stronger partnerships of development action for better results

Civil society participation in the Cameroonian governance landscape can make significant contributions to the overcoming of national and local socioeconomic challenges. Opportunities for engagement have taken various forms in recent years, most notably with civil society's active monitoring role within the framework of the public finances management reform spearheaded by the Ministry of Finances under the Global Plan on Public Finance Reform 2019-2021.

Reflective of local civil society's key asks and subsequent advocacy gains on greater involvement of its actors in the management of public affairs¹⁸ and recognition of their contributions in all spheres of development cooperation are the following: the effective dissemination of the Citizen Budget at the local level since 2019¹⁹; the introduction of gender-sensitive indicators in the 2021 State Budget; and the participation of Cameroon, in 2019 and 2022²⁰, in the United Nations Voluntary National Reviews framework, which measures countries' progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) against the backdrop of global efforts to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

While results of these engagements have been encouraging in some areas, which helped to consolidate a dynamic dialogue between civil society actors and other stakeholders (public authorities, private sector, technical and financial partners), there remains important gaps to be filled in terms of Cameroon meeting the SDGs 2030 deadline and leaving no one behind. There is also consensus on the extent to which those gaps may be attributed to ineffective policies.

The Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (2010-2019), for example, as the main policy implementation tool for the relevant period, did not produce the expected outcomes. Its successor, the National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30), outlines national priorities and development strategies intended for these to be met²¹, which are of particular interest in the context of the GPEDC 4MR, as Cameroon undertook similar country exercises in 2014, 2016 and 2018²² and has therefore championed a continuous improvement process.

This was evidenced in the validation workshop on the Roadmap of the Action Dialogue for Effective Development Co-operation, conducted by the MINEPAT, that was held in December 2021 in the capital, Yaoundé.

The GPEDC has been the official source for three SDG targets which are being examined in this new assessment, namely:

- SDG 17.15: Respect each country's policy space and leadership
- SDG 17.16: Multi-stakeholder partnerships for development
- SDG 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

The performance of Cameroon in those indicators shows stagnancy on the one hand with regard to SDG17, and moderate progress on the other hand, concerning SDG 5. Other indicators reveal a downward trajectory which indicates that current efforts to achieve the SDGs simply do not go far enough, and more must be done to reverse the trend. The country thus has an opportunity to recalibrate its efforts, building on the momentum around the advancement of 4MR SDG targets. One of the most defining tools envisaged to do so is an Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF) designed to support the US\$ 61 billion cost of the implementation of the NDS30²³. As the INFF is implemented and the NDS30 matures, so too should stakeholder mutual accountability become a central part of this dual process which will in turn consolidate Cameroon's development monitoring and evaluation systems.

Technical works

Held on 16 April 2024 in Yaoundé, the Civil Society Caucus served as a lever for garnering participant views and perspectives on the functioning and efficacy of Cameroon's core systems for development cooperation, such as Multi Partners Committee and the United Nations Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development (UNSDCF) Steering Committee, among others. The drafting of a letter to be delivered to the MINEPAT, anchored in the building of a more effective civil society 4MR engagement strategy, formed the most of participant inputs toward this activity, based on four main advocacy areas, namely:

- The extent to which civil society organizations, by comparison to other development partners, (subnational governments, parliaments, the private sector, foundations, and trade unions) are included in the development process.
- The state of Cameroon's core systems for development cooperation and how development partners align with and use them.
- Actions taken by Cameroon and development partners to make development cooperation transparent.
- The choice of participants and modalities of development cooperation consultative processes at national and local level and the quality of data available to monitor progress.



Civil Society Letter to MINEPAT on 4MR Effective Engagement: main orientations

Participants organized in a smaller team for letter elaboration purposes and showed great commitment to this activity which produced a set of key asks, including:

- Use of the National Action Dialogue Roadmap recommendations calling for meaningful inclusion of civil society advocacy orientations in policy work and promotion of a civil society enabling environment.
- Addressing slow progress on development actors' coordination at the national and local levels.
- Mainstreaming transparency and accountability across development cooperation actions and strengthening the implementation framework around use of country systems, through greater participation of local civil society in the management of public affairs.
- Integrating civil society-driven 4MR performance indicators in the design and implementation of framework monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Creating a performance-based results-management system covering all parts of the development cooperation action chain and designing a sound monitoring and evaluation mechanism in support thereof.
- Developing locally-based census programs involving rural communities to generate actionable data and allocating adequate resources to the same.

The main proposal contained in the Letter relates to the establishment of a MINEPAT-Civil Society Dialogue Platform.

- 1 <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/Cameroon>
- 2 <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2023-05/Summary%20of%20Action%20Dialogue%20in%20Cameroon.PDF>
- 3 <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- 4 <https://www.dgb.cm/en/civil-society-organisations-csos-equipped-for-the-dissemination-of-the-citizen-budget/>
- 5 https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2021-08/Concept%20Note%20for%20Action%20Dialogue%202021_0507_0.pdf p.1
- 6 <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/cameroon/>
- 7 <https://inff.org/resource/development-plan-costings-repository>
- 8 <https://onpolicy.org/the-challenge-of-the-decentralization-process-in-cameroon/>
- 9 <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-march-2023>
- 10 <https://inff.org/country/cameroon> <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/data-gender-equality-cameroon>
- 11 <https://inff.org/country/cameroon>
- 12 <https://inff.org/resource/development-plan-costings-repository>
- 13 <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/SDGOnePagers>
- 14 <https://www.dgb.cm/budget-2024-accent-sur-la-budgetisation-sensible-genre-bsg/>
- 15 <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/cameroon>
- 16 <https://www.pefa.org/>
- 17 <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/cameroon>
- 18 <https://www.dgb.cm/en/civil-society-organisations-csos-equipped-for-the-dissemination-of-the-citizen-budget/>
- 19 <https://www.dgb.cm/vulgarisation-du-budget-citoyen-2024-la-societe-civile-entre-en-scene/>
- 20 <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/cameroon>
- 21 https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2022-01/NATIONAL_DEVELOPMENT_STRATEGY_2020_2030.pdf
- 22 <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/Cameroon>
- 23 <https://inff.org/resource/development-plan-costings-repository>

Ghana became a middle-income country in 2010, yet the country relies heavily on aid. Though donor contributions remain significant, there is evidence that development assistance has been declining since 2010.

The government has launched a "Ghana Beyond Aid" initiative, which is focusing on the country taking full responsibility for and ownership of its economic growth and transformation in a new partnership with development partners through innovative and long-term financing instruments to support economic development for higher productivity, jobs and inclusive growth.

Ghana prides itself as a democratic country. However, the country is among the lowest ranked on the continent in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. Access to information, and accountability and transparency issues are a challenge.

The Global Partnership monitoring led by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) is a country-led and voluntary exercise that measures efforts to make development cooperation more effective on the ground in accordance with the four effectiveness principles. It tracks progress in meeting agreed commitments.

The Global Partnership monitoring is the official source of data for three SDG targets:

- **SDG 17.15:** Respect each country's policy space and leadership.
- **SDG 17.16:** Multi-stakeholder partnerships for development.
- **SDG 5.c:** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

With reference to the above, the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), a global CSO platform focusing on effective development cooperation to enhance CSOs active engagement at the country level, has built the capacity of its country focal points to actively engage in the official monitoring processes in their respective countries. In addition, the focal points are expected to collect data on the status of development cooperation to produce a CSO country level report which will feed into the CPDE Global Report on the monitoring process and effective development cooperation.

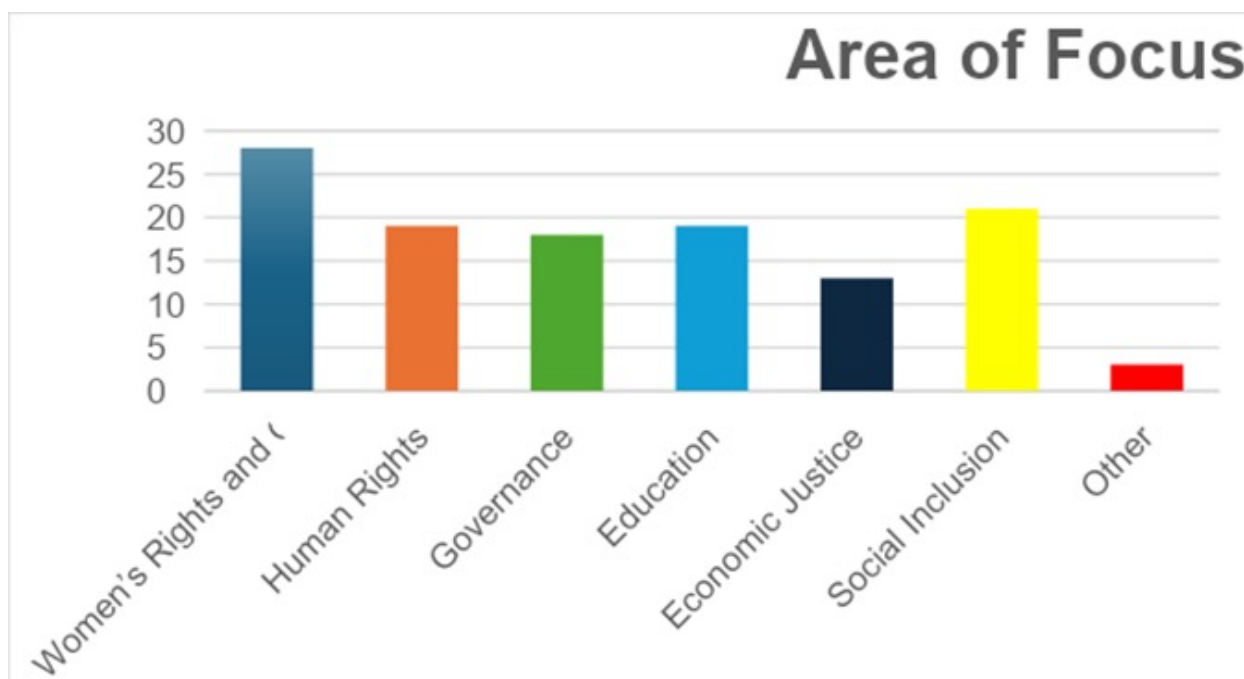
In March 2023, Ghana volunteered to participate in the 4th Monitoring Round (4MR) of the GPEDC, covering the period 2023-2026. The Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), the CPDE's country focal point, with support from the CPDE, is engaging the 4MR process in Ghana including producing a report on development cooperation focusing on:

- Whole-of-society
- State and Use of Country Systems
- Transparency
- Leaving No One Behind

As part of its engagement with the National Coordinator at the Ministry of Finance (MoF), NETRIGHT has received an invitation from the MoF to serve as one of the focal points for the 4MR process. The National Coordinator has solicited NETRIGHT's support to get the Trades Union Congress - Ghana and the Ghana Federation of Labour to send representatives to serve as focal points for labor.

The report was produced utilizing both primary and secondary data. The primary data collection involved a survey which was completed by 28 CSOs working on different thematic areas at the national, regional, and community levels.

The secondary data consisted of the review of relevant documents on development cooperation and related issues. The national coordinator was engaged in the 4MR process. Ghana has identified institutions and invited them to nominate representatives to serve as focal points for their institutions.



Assessment of the 4MR status in Ghana

1. Whole of Society

A country's efforts to include the 'whole of society' to enhance an effective development cooperation agenda involves intentionality in facilitating processes that allow inclusivity and diversity of multi-stakeholders' participation in all aspects of development cooperation. This can be achieved through institutionalized collaboration and partnerships among state and non-state actors which specifically target CSOs, academia, communities, private sector, local populations, and not forgetting the voices of women and the most vulnerable and other development actors.

In assessing Ghana's efforts at applying the concept of 'whole of society' by ensuring the inclusion of diverse voices through effective engagements, collaborations and partnerships to ensure that development prioritizes the needs and interests of its population, the survey focused on:

- Engagement and Dialogue
- Parliamentary Oversight
- Enabling Environment for CSOs
- Private Sector Engagement in Development Cooperation

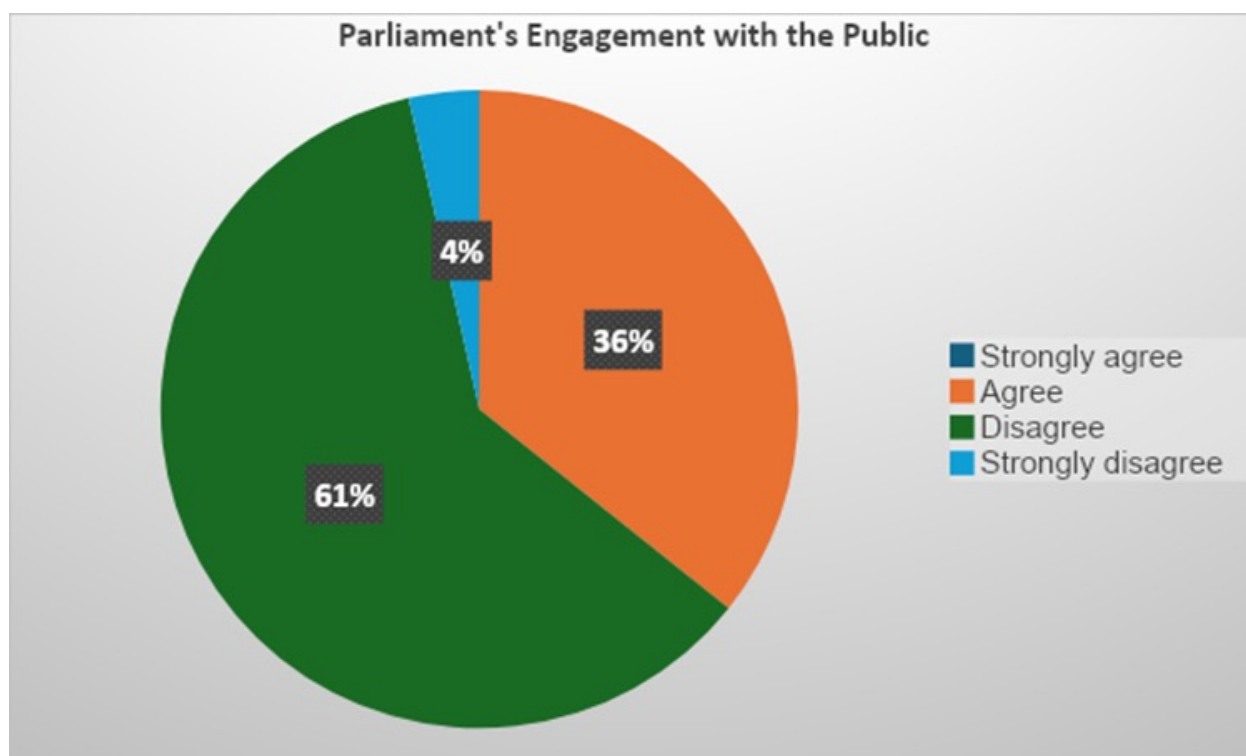
Engagement and Dialogue

Ghana has a more open political system, a media which is quite robust but with a tendency towards sensationalism, and an almost exclusive focus on corruption and political party issues. Citizens are saddled with a choiceless political system which leaves the electorate cynical and demoralized, and the persistence of women's lack of traction in the political system. The executive arm of the government has not been very responsive to advocacy, except in very superficial ways. The Parliament is arrogant, complacent and difficult to work with. The civil society landscape has grown in leaps and bounds, and women's rights organizations have contributed to this growth.

The survey revealed that at the subnational level, local authorities occasionally engage local communities and other stakeholders especially during the development of the four-year medium-term plans for the districts through town hall meetings. In terms of the Parliament, 61% of respondents disagreed that there was effective communication and dialogue between the Parliament and its constituents, while 36% agreed that there were efforts at promoting effective communication and dialogue with constituents.

Examples were cited of the Speaker of the Parliament's breakfast meetings, where development actors including CSOs are invited to dialogue on specific issues. The Parliament also uses its public hearings as a means of engaging the public on bills before Parliament. However, it was noted that development issues and policy debates on the floor of Parliament are highly influenced by partisan positions.

With respect to inclusive dialogue between CSOs and government bodies, 43% of respondents agreed that there was some level of engagement on development issues. The National Development Planning Commission, the state institution responsible for providing a national development policy framework, preparing and ensuring effective implementation of approved national development plans, and coordinating economic and social activities country-wide¹ engages CSOs especially during the development of national strategies. Sector Ministries occasionally engage CSOs on some development issues.



To enhance effective engagement and dialogue, CSOs including women's rights organizations must be recognised as development partners in their own right, with more institutionalized spaces created to strengthen inclusiveness by involving CSOs in development processes and soliciting feedback from civil society on the impact of developmental projects. It is imperative for the Parliament to engage their constituents regularly and ensure that development is informed by the diverse voices of the people.

Parliamentary Oversight

With a membership of 275 that must be appointed to at least one but not more than three standing committees, Ghana's Parliament has fairly extensive oversight powers. However, the legislature's oversight powers have been compromised by excessive partisanship that impedes its work. This contributes to the challenges that the Parliament faces in effectively discharging its oversight responsibilities.

The survey revealed that the legislature, to some extent, discharges its oversight responsibilities. This is not surprising because the oversight responsibility of Parliament is hindered by the strong party cohesion that exists in Parliament, which should have been used to promote legislative work and oversight. However, its strong cohesion is used to promote party positions, thereby compromising the powers of Parliament to provide effective oversight on the executive arm of government.

It is worthy to note that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) over the years has performed credibly when it comes to oversight of the expenditure of public funds and through its work has uncovered a lot of corruption. However, the challenge of parliamentary committees is that they do not have prosecutorial powers. Thus, they have to rely on multiple agencies and channels for further action, including enforcement of their recommendations and prosecution of their findings.

There are instances where the PAC's findings and recommendations have not received expected executive backing. It is critical that the Parliament takes its oversight responsibilities seriously since its approval is required for the majority of development interventions. There is the need for parliament to consciously track and evaluate the progress of development interventions devoid of partisan politics. Parliament should ensure public access to oversight proceedings and information and engage citizens, especially affected communities, to provide evidence of development works in their communities.

This should be reinforced in strategic priorities and measurable public engagement strategies aimed at enhancing civic engagement in the work of the Parliament. The Parliament should facilitate public participation and consultation in its oversight process. This can involve holding public hearings, inviting stakeholders to provide input, and ensuring transparency in decision-making.

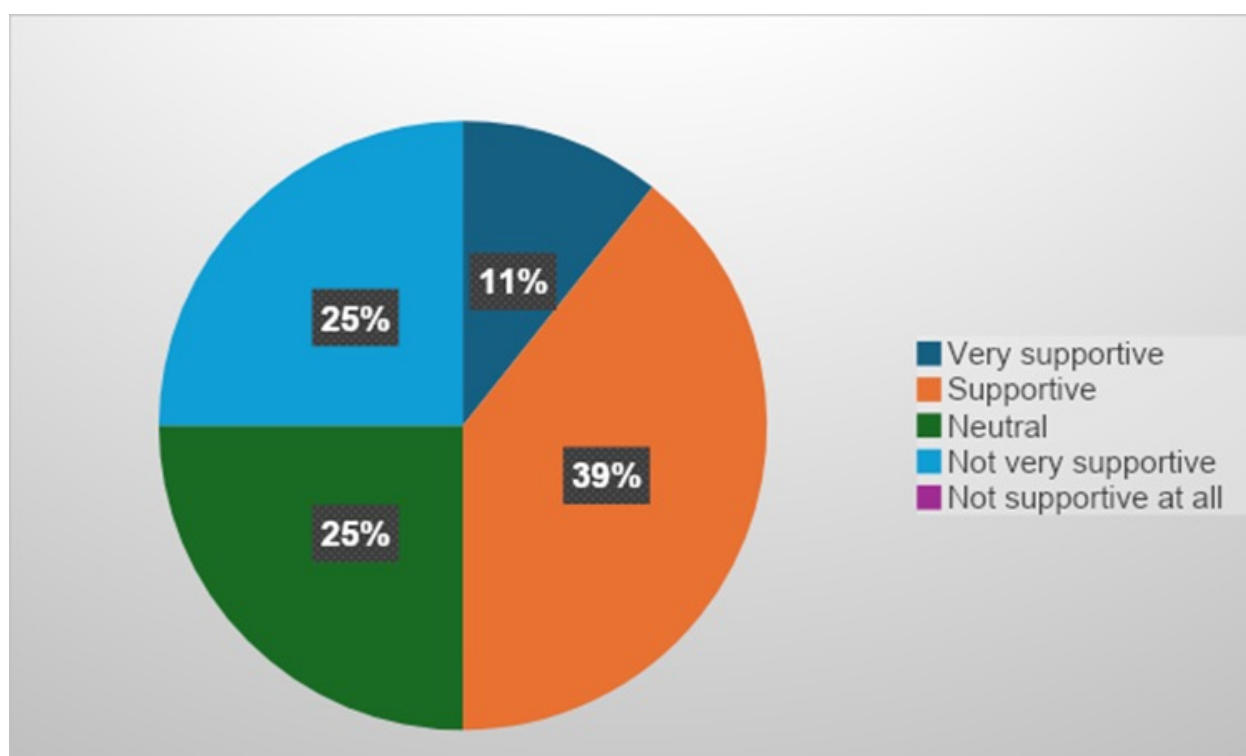
Enabling Environment for CSOs

CSOs are increasingly recognised as key players in promoting democratic governance, equitable development and inclusive growth. However, in many countries they also face challenges relating to restricted legal and political space in which they operate. To be able to play their role in society to their full potential, CSOs need an operating environment that gives them the space to act freely.

An enabling environment for CSOs to operate includes appropriate laws and policies, political space which allows free association and participation, availability of financial and human resources, and access to technology. It also includes various specific dimensions such as: formation, operation, expression, peaceful assembly, access to resources, and collaboration and coalitions both among CSOs and between CSOs and government.

At the national level, dialogue between government and CSOs in addressing the enabling environment within the context of development cooperation has been relatively mixed. There is no legal framework guiding the activities of the advocacy-based CSOs. An NGO bill drafted in 2007 is still pending due to provisions that were likely to exacerbate the dwindling space for civic engagement. While the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana recognises the need for broad consultation on national development issues as reflected in Chapter 6 (37, 2a) of the constitution, Ghana is yet to institutionalize and systematize the consultation process and there is no mechanism for feedback from government to CSOs.

Despite the challenges, 39% of respondents felt the legal framework of the country, particularly the constitution, supports civic engagement in development activities.



Barriers that limit CSOs effective engagement in development initiatives include:

- **Access to Information:** CSOs face challenges accessing relevant information and data related to development initiatives. The Right to Information Act 2019 makes provisions for proactive disclosure which is a key principle of the right of access to information. Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Act provides for proactive disclosure which requires that those who hold information of public interest must routinely provide such information to the public even without being requested to do so. However, there is no standardized way for doing that and therefore, every institution decides on when and what to release at any given time.

A sampling carried out from April 2023 to February 2024 by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative on proactive disclosure revealed that none of the 50 institutions monitored proactively disclosed all the specified categories of required information. This shows a major gap in proactive disclosure of basic and necessary information, which undermines transparency and accountability in governance. The disclosure of basic information such as audit reports and contracts allow citizens to effectively monitor and hold the government accountable. For instance, when information on contracts that have been awarded are proactively disclosed, citizens are able to monitor contracts implemented in their communities. The lack of transparency from state actors can impede CSOs' ability to conduct research, monitor progress, and advocate for informed policy decisions.

- **Civic Engagement:** Cumbersome registration, coupled with new regulations for non-profit organizations, is exacerbating the shrinking space for civic engagement. The government, through reforms in the name of streamlining CSOs activities, is introducing regulations that are negatively impacting policy spaces for CSOs. There is political interference on CSOs that are perceived not to be supporting the government and are targeted as supporting the opposition. The media has had its fair share of political interference in its work. Political biases and polarization are heavily impacting policy spaces.

- **Shifting Donor Focus:** The continuously changing funding landscape and requirements are making accessibility of funds, especially by women's rights organizations, community-based and emerging organizations, very challenging.

There is the need for intentionality by the government to put transparent structures in place that creates an enabling environment to enhance civic engagement in development interventions.

Private Sector Engagement in Development Cooperation

Ghana, like other African countries, faces various development challenges, including poverty, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to healthcare and education, and environmental sustainability issues. However, with the increased call on the private sector to play a key role in development to achieve the SDGs, the government has embarked on initiatives that seek to engage the private sector in development.

The Ghana Investment Promotion Centre is the main agency responsible for promoting and facilitating private sector investment in Ghana. It offers various services, including investment advisory, promotion, and facilitation, to attract both local and foreign private sector investments.² However, there are concerns about how in efforts to attract foreign investments, the government tends to create an enabling business environment that favors foreign companies to the detriment of local businesses. Thus, local businesses are unable to compete with large, multinational companies, due to the numerous incentives that governments give to foreign companies.

Public-private partnerships have been used as a modality to undertake infrastructure projects in sectors such as transportation, energy, and telecommunications. Notable examples include the expansion of the Tema Port and the construction of the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange in Accra through private sector participation.³

In responding to questions on how the private sector is accountable for its social and environmental responsibilities in development projects, the survey revealed that even though the private sector uses corporate social responsibility to support development interventions, targeted communities for the interventions are not consulted to assess their needs in order to develop interventions that address their needs. Commercialization and capitalist capture of natural resources at the expense of communities have resulted in increased inequalities, social injustices and destruction of the livelihoods of local populations. Private sector entities are not accountable to the communities they work in, and their operations continue to create social and environmental injustices.

It is the responsibility of the government to ensure the adherence to the Kampala Principles by the private sector. There is the need for CSOs and local communities to intensify advocacy and demand accountability from companies. Public scrutiny and activism can compel companies to adopt more sustainable practices and transparency in their operations. The private sector will not automatically undertake activities that are aimed at achieving the SDGs, so it is dependent on other development actors, such as the government and civil society, to monitor and ensure that the private sector operates by the development effectiveness principles.

2. State and Use of Country Systems

The use of country systems contributes to providing the needed resources to strengthen a country's capacity and performance, enhances domestic accountability mechanisms, and contributes to better public financial management.

Planning

Ghana's development planning is premised on its Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework, titled *An Agenda for Jobs II: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All (2022-2025)*, to provide the overall framework for medium-term economic recovery and transformation of the country. An agenda to push for a 50-year long term development plan for the country has not been realized due to ruling governments' interest in pursuing their priorities as reflected in their party manifesto.

Respondents felt the planning process is relatively inclusive but noted that occasionally there have been instances when development partners' agenda conflicts with national priorities and policies. There is the need for open and transparent dialogue with development partners for a better understanding of national development priorities, challenges, and policy objectives. The dialogue should be inclusive, bringing on board diverse voices to ensure development assistance is context-specific and responsive to local needs.

Effective coordination and harmonization is required to enhance alignment of donor interventions with national development strategies to complement existing efforts and avoid duplication or fragmentation of resources and development initiatives. While donor support is important, it should be informed by national priorities, and development partners should not use concepts such as localization and co-creation to push their own agendas.

Respect for Country's Policy Space

Effective development cooperation requires the recognition of the sovereignty of recipient countries. Respondents felt there were instances where development partners push their agenda or conditions that undermine local autonomy. Respondents indicated the need for the promotion of an equal level playing field for development discourse where all actors are recognised in their own right.

Public Financial Management

The Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) launched in 2014 aims at onboarding all entities financed by the national budget, including Ministries, Districts and Agencies (MDAs), as well as government-funded schools, hospitals and Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs). It is mandatory for MDAs and MMDAs to use the GIFMIS for their financial transactions from all funding sources from the government, development partners and internally generated funds. This rule has not been systematically applied. MMDAs that execute their budgets outside their FMIS limit the government's oversight of efficient management of funds.

The survey revealed that Ghana's public finance management system for development funds is moderately transparent and effective. Emphasis was placed on instituting transparent measures for monitoring to enhance accountability. Findings and recommendations in the Auditor General's Report should be implemented and deliberate measures should address any loopholes in the system.

National Budget

Ghana's budget cycle involves four broad steps:

- Budget Formulation
- Budget Approval
- Budget Implementation
- Budget Monitoring and Review

The budget cycle starts with the development of the national strategic document which informs all sectoral plans. That is, all Ministries, Districts and Agencies (MDAs) review their programs to ensure that it is consistent with national priorities. The critical point of influencing the budget by CSOs is during the preparation of the national and sectoral medium-term development plans. It is important to facilitate civil society participation at the formulation stage through broader civic engagement which recognises diverse voices and prioritizes the needs and interests of the citizens. To promote active civic engagement in the budgetary process, respondents felt the need for clear timelines and entry points for engagement. The survey indicated partial alignment of the budget with national priorities outlined in the medium-term plans. This assertion requires further interrogation.

Gender Budgeting

Gender equality is a fundamental human right enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Further commitments to gender equality are demonstrated in the development of a National Gender Policy in 2015. The policy commits the government to improve the legal, social, political, cultural, and economic conditions of Ghanaians, particularly of women, girls, and children. It also addresses women's rights and access to justice, women's empowerment and livelihoods, accountable governance structures, women's leadership and participation, women's economic justice, and gender roles and relations.

However, there are still serious challenges due to the ineffective implementation of these policies arising from insufficient directives to relevant MDAs, and logistical and human resource challenges, among other reasons. Also, in addressing social issues, policymakers tend to ignore the interrelationships of power and gender inequality, often leading to an exacerbation of the situation of women in relation to men. Consequently, Ghanaian women and girls continue to be marginalized and discriminated against in several spheres of social, political, and economic endeavors.

Parliament has a Select Committee on Gender and Children's Affairs and a Women's Caucus. The Committee is expected to ensure that the national budget is gender-responsive. However, the Committee limits its work to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. Budget debates in the Parliament do not focus on ensuring that the budget is gender responsive. Debates on the budget based on gender differentials are either rare or often weak. Parliamentarians lack adequate resources and the capacity to analyze the budget from a gender perspective.

Generally, women's rights and gender equality issues on the floor of Parliament do not attract the needed attention and urgency. Parliamentarians are quick to defend party lines without taking into consideration the gender implications of their actions or inaction. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Finance in 2021 on SDG 5.c.1 revealed that the level of resources both in absolute terms (national currency) and as a percentage of total public expenditure allocated to gender responsive policies and/or programs for the 2020 financial year was less than 1%.

This has been the case for years. Gender budgeting is not consciously practiced as part of the national budgeting system. A gender-responsive budgeting process which was piloted in three key MDAs in 2008, with the aim of extending it to cover twelve additional MDAs⁴, was short-lived. The Finance Ministry is working towards setting up a Gender Unit which is expected to provide an oversight responsibility of ensuring that the national budget is gender responsive.

Accountability Mechanisms

Majority of respondents felt accountability mechanisms in Ghana are somewhat effective. This can be attributed to the fact that citizens have no hope in the accountability mechanisms in the country. Independent institutions set up to hold public officials accountable are not adequately resourced and are constantly faced with political interference which negatively impacts on their effectiveness.

Ghana has a well-defined local governance system through its decentralization program which aims at empowering local communities for development, and bringing government to the people, while ensuring upward, or bottom-up, accountability. District assemblies – the medium for rolling out the decentralization concept through a non-partisanship approach, ensuring transparency in the use of public resources and other government initiatives and promoting active civic engagement in order to hold duty bearers accountable, have become highly partisan. Even though there is some level of improved measures for civil and political rights, the country still suffers from high levels of corruption and low levels of transparency and accountability.

Information Management

Ghana has developed an automated information management system known as the Ghana Development Cooperation Management Information System, expected to serve as a data analysis and reporting tool for managing aid portfolio, recording the elements of aid agreements, monitoring and evaluating aid inflows, and disseminating aid information among all stakeholders, interested groups and others in the development space.⁵

Procurement

The Public Procurement Authority (PPA) established by the Public Procurement Act (Act 663) is the regulatory body responsible for the effective implementation of the Act. The Act seeks to promote fairness, transparency and ensure that public procurement is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner. The regulatory body is faced with challenges such as inadequate funding, political interference, poor dissemination of procurement information and low capacity of procurement managers. The ability of procurement officials to ensure strict adherence to the law without political interference, would facilitate the effective implementation of the Act.

There have been several public outcries in Ghana with the government being criticized for influencing procurement processes; many contracts are either sole sourced, or companies with political leanings win tenders. Tendering processes are not made public. However, there are instances where such information is leaked to the public with civil society, including the media, raising concerns about the tendering process. A recent case is a contract between the Ghana Revenue Authority and Strategic Mobilisation Limited, which was revealed, through investigative journalism and by civil society watchdogs, to have been signed without approval by the PPA.

3. Transparency

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana contains adequate provisions for ensuring financial discipline and effective management of resources and economic governance in general. Even though there are provisions for authorizing expenditure through parliamentary approval, the fact that Ghana's parliament is highly partisan has made it a daunting task, with parliamentarians having to be whipped to support party positions.

Institutions such as the Auditor-General's Department and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) exist to exercise stringent control on the use of public resources. However, as mentioned earlier, the PAC does not have prosecutorial powers, so it is the government that is obligated to act on the findings and recommendations. The budget is prepared through a process that is somewhat transparent.

Civil society and private sector operators participate in pre-budget consultations while Ministries, Departments and Agencies have the opportunity to make their input. The approved budget is published and made accessible to citizens through newspapers and posted on the website of the Finance Ministry. However, there is the need for clear entry points and timelines to enhance civic engagement.

Countries' action

Ghana's development plan is posted on the website of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), the state institution responsible for the coordination and production of the country's development plan. The NDPC produces the Annual Progress Report which is posted on its website. In addition, Medium Term Development Plans for sector ministries and districts, including reports, are posted on their websites.

The survey revealed that the country is taking steps to strengthen oversight and accountability mechanisms and gradually improving access to information on development cooperation. 14% of respondents indicated that not much has been done to improve transparency, citing the lack of proper structures, while 35% of respondents noted the ineffectiveness of actions taken to enhance transparency due to political interference.

Development partners' action

Development partners have detailed information on their websites. Bilateral donors maintain high-level contacts with relevant sector Ministries and often host special events or issue press releases focused on promoting specific programmes or sectors. There are thematic sector teams consisting of the donor community, government and CSOs; NETRIGHT, for instance, represents women's rights organizations in the Gender Equality Sector Team. The survey showed an improved collaboration and stakeholder engagement among development actors.

4. Leaving No One Behind

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the government introduced flagship programs aimed at leaving no one behind. Yet processes leading to the institution of the flagship programs cannot be said to have been inclusive ensuring that diverse voices were considered in the formulation of the interventions.

Consultations

Respondents noted the need for intentionality in reaching out to the most marginalized in society including women, girls, youth among several others in development strategies. About 45% of respondents felt moderately effective mechanisms such as town hall meetings at the community level and public hearings at the national level to enhance civic engagement on development cooperation. However, these spaces do not consciously target women, girls, youth, the aged and physically challenged persons in development discourse. Women's rights organizations try as much as possible to claim spaces to ensure that they actively engage in development processes. However, the engagement is limited, and the policy space is male-dominated and tilted in favor of mainstream male-led CSOs.

Targets and Results

MDAs and MMDAs have internal mechanisms including data and statistics for monitoring progress on targets and results indicators but these are not readily available to the public.

Data and Statistics

The Ghana Statistical Service is responsible for collecting and disseminating statistical information. Disaggregated data collected by the GSS is used to inform development strategies. Respondents acknowledged that some efforts are being made to utilize disaggregated data to address disparities and ensure that development interventions leave no one behind. But the government needs to be more intentional about collecting gender disaggregated data to be able to address gender inequalities in the country.

It was pointed out that there are instances where disaggregated data are not readily available or of low standard for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Data collection systems may not capture relevant variables at disaggregated levels, or data may be incomplete, outdated, or inconsistent, making it difficult to draw reliable conclusions.

Challenges and lessons learned

The main challenges were time constraints and the lack of awareness due to limited information on the 4MR process in Ghana. Ghana is at the stage of inviting institutions to nominate representatives to serve as focal points for their institutions. Other challenges include many CSOs not being interested or lacking understanding of the effective development cooperation agenda and this affected the timely collection of data to inform the writing of the report.

Key lessons learned included leveraging on existing relationships to get CSOs to complete the survey, even though there were some delays. Effective coordination among development actors is key to enhancing the 4MR process; this will allow for quality and adequate data to be collected.

Conclusion

The entire process for the production of this report has revealed the need for Ghana to improve its systems devoid of partisanship to enhance active civic engagement in development interventions in the country. CSO respondents emphasized on the importance of effective communication and dialogue between the Parliament and its constituents. Regarding the engagement of civil society in development processes, efforts by the National Development Planning Commission were acknowledged in creating spaces for engagement and the development of national strategies.

However, the survey findings highlighted the need for CSOs, including women's rights organizations, to be recognized as development partners in their own right; and the need for more institutionalized spaces created to strengthen inclusiveness and soliciting feedback from civil society on the impact of developmental projects. It is imperative for the Parliament to engage their constituents regularly and ensure that development is informed by the diverse voices of the people.

Ghana has been making efforts towards instituting mechanisms to enhance effective development cooperation. However, these efforts need to be backed by political will and commitment to promote active civic engagement in development cooperation.

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With over 200 million people, Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world and accounts for over 50% of West Africa. In addition to its population, Nigeria is one of the biggest exporters of crude oil with the largest natural gas reserves in the continent. With these vast oil and gas resources, it was expected that the country would build a prosperous economy. However, despite its enormous human and natural endowments, poverty and exclusive growth remain a significant challenge for Nigeria.

Between 2000 and 2014, Nigeria's economy experienced broad-based sustained growth of over 7% annually, on average, benefitting from favorable global conditions and macroeconomic and first-stage structural reforms. From 2015-2022, however, growth rates decreased and GDP per capita flattened, driven by monetary and exchange rate policy distortions.

With the change of government in 2023, the government of President Bola Tinubu embarked on a number of reforms to reset the macroeconomic conditions for stability and growth. Two major reforms were embarked upon by the government: the removal of subsidy on petrol and the efforts towards unification of the foreign exchange market to single market reflective exchange rates. The reforms have, however, caused serious hardship on ordinary citizens due to high inflation in the country.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its 2024 Article IV Consultation observes that "Nigeria's economic outlook is challenging." It went further to state that "Recent improvements in revenue collection and oil production are encouraging as Nigeria's low revenue mobilization constrains the government's ability to respond to shocks and to promote long-term development." The Bretton Woods institution further stated that "the recently approved targeted social safety net program that will provide cash transfers to vulnerable households needs to be fully implemented before the government can address costly, implicit fuel and electricity subsidies in a manner that will ensure low-income households are protected."

4MR ASSESSMENT

In December 2023, the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) conducted a training on CSO engagement in the 4th Monitoring Round (4MR) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) in Brussels, Belgium. The training exercise lasted from the 7th til the 8th of December 2023. The Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ) was invited by the CPDE and represented Nigeria at the training as the CSO Focal Point in the country. It is in view of this that ANEEJ received support from the CPDE to engage stakeholders in the national level monitoring process and submit a report focusing on the assessment of the 4MR themes, namely: Whole of Society, State and Use of Country Systems, Transparency, and Leave No One Behind.

Activities

1. Engagement Meeting with the Hon. Minister of Budget and Economic Planning:

ANEEJ had an engagement meeting with the Hon. Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, the Director of International Cooperation, Dr. Ebimaero, and the National Coordinator, Dr. Gloria K. Ahmed and other members of the Minister's team on the 15th of April, 2024 in Abuja.



Figure 1. Engagement Meeting with the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, H.E. Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu in his Office at the Ministry in Abuja.

2. Stakeholders Assessment of the 4MR themes:

There was a meeting of stakeholders to assess the 4MR themes. Civil society and media leaders converged to assess the 4MR themes at a one-day Stakeholders Assessment of the themes on the 29th of April, 2024 in Abuja. Stakeholders were divided into groups to assess the four themes of the 4MR. At the end of the sessions, the stakeholders made useful inputs into the exercise.



Figure 2. Comrade Taiwo Otitolaye, National Coordinator, Publish What You Pay Campaign-Nigeria addressing the issues.



Figure 3. Mr. Mohammed Bougei Attah, a Procurement Expert speaking to the issues at the Stakeholders Assessment of the 4MR Themes in Abuja, Nigeria.

Status of the 4MR Themes

1. Whole of Society

The government consults and includes diverse stakeholders—CSOs, parliaments, private sector, foundations and trade unions in the development agenda. The government consults CSOs in the design, implementation of development policies through different platforms. The Open Government Partnership is one platform where government and CSOs sit together as equal partners in national engagement.

Development partners consult with CSOs on their development policies and share information on their CSO support with the government and promote an enabling environment. The IMF recently held a multi-stakeholder consultation with CSOs, government and other stakeholders during the Article IV consultation in the country. There is an alignment, effectiveness, result accountability initiative of the Nigerian Parliament, the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning and CSOs. There are, however, restrictions by the government against civil society that affect their enabling environment to operate, such as their access to information.

The private sector on the other hand has strong organs that the government engages and is included in the development process. Such bodies like the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria and the Bankers Committee are a few examples of who the government consults on issues of development. In the same way, the Nigeria Economic Summit Group is a veritable organ that the government often consults and includes in policy formation. However, while trade unions like the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria are strong partners in the development agenda, they are always poorly consulted in policies that advance workers welfare. Hence, these unions are always at loggerheads with the government due to non-favourable policies affecting workers at different levels. Subnational governments are also included in the development process through the governors forum which is a strong organ of state governments that has great influence on the national government policies.

2. State and Use of Country Systems

The Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning oversees national planning in the country. There is the existence of the National Development Plan 2021-2025 which sets out national development priorities for development partners to align their interventions. Also, in the same Ministry, there is the Monitoring and Evaluation Department which is responsible for improving the availability, quality and dissemination of information about government performance to improve accountability and policy.

Development partners have their agenda but there is always a merger between government and development partners. Nigeria has a Public Financial Management System. There are laws and regulations in place for public finance management like the Fiscal Responsibility Act. However, there are some bad governance practices which expose the economy to uncontrolled financial hemorrhage. The Bureau for Public Procurement which should award contracts is often sidelined in the procurement process. There have been measures to ensure transparency and accountability using certain institutions like the Treasury Single Account, the Treasury Open Portal, and the National Extractive Initiative for extractive industries.

3. Transparency

There is limited exchange of information by the Nigerian government about official development finance to the citizens. Even with the Freedom of Information Law, information on official development assistance is difficult to access. However, Nigeria has a development assistance database domiciled in the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning. Nigeria also has a development cooperation policy that defines national priorities for cooperation and includes specific country-level targets for effective development cooperation intended for the Nigerian government and development cooperation partners. The Nigerian government and development partners jointly assess progress towards targets. However, results of such assessments have not been made public. Development partners' reporting is very limited as they pursue their own interest during country interventions.

4. Leave No One Behind

To some extent, citizens are consulted in development cooperation. The democratic structure of the country makes room for consultation of a wide range of stakeholders, from the local government, state and national levels, through their elected representatives in the Parliament on development priorities. CSOs are consulted to some extent in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies when the government considers it necessary.

However, citizens especially women and girls, children and youths and other vulnerable groups are hardly consulted during the design, monitoring and implementation of national development policies affecting them. Nigeria has a system that tracks allocation for gender equality and women's empowerment but these are hardly tracked. Despite the fact that Nigeria has a Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development, issues of gender budgeting and targeting are hardly used to inform budget allocation for women and girls, youths and children and other vulnerable groups. Nigeria now has a disability law to cater to people with disabilities (PWDs) but consultation with PWDs are still very minimal and sometimes absent. In the same vein, there is no disaggregated data that informs budget allocation to women and girls, youth and children and other vulnerable groups in the country. This makes it difficult to set targets and achieve meaningful results.

Lessons and Challenges

The multi-stakeholder approach in development cooperation fosters a sense of belonging for all stakeholders involved in the development agenda. It is also vital for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the 4MR, stakeholders are aware of the mutual accountability mechanisms, which involves everyone; not just the government but CSOs and development partners as well. There is a need for disaggregated data and information especially to inform allocation of development priorities to gender and vulnerable groups.

The challenges are as follows:

- **Lack of political will on the part of the Federal Government of Nigeria.** The Nigerian government bluntly said it will not participate in the 4MR process of CPDE when the ANEEJ team visited the Ministry of Budget and Economic planning. This is because the government is averse to disclosures of data and information to the public. Therefore, no stakeholder meeting has been convened and there's none being planned.
- **There are capacity issues that need to be addressed.** There is a need to build the capacity of stakeholders involved in development cooperation. The capacity of CSOs and other stakeholders should be built to enable them to deliver interventions and achieve set targets and results.
- **Data issues:** The absence of disaggregated data affects planning and budgeting especially for gender. There is no disaggregated data for women and girls, youth and children and other vulnerable groups in the country. Absence of these makes planning and budgeting not only difficult but also non-realistic.
- **Corruption:** Corruption is a major issue in development cooperation in Nigeria. The absence of transparency by some of the stakeholders engenders corruption in the system. The diversion of development assistance from its intended use affects the country's development adversely. Corruption in the form of illicit financial flows, money laundering, budget padding, diversion of public funds, and contract splitting have robbed the country of humongous resources that would have been channeled to the SDGs and other developmental agenda.
- **Access to Information:** There is limited disclosure of information by government and development partners. In some cases, CSOs find it extremely difficult to access government information needed to carry out their interventions. Despite the existence of the Freedom of Information Law in Nigeria, access to information is difficult and sometimes not granted.
- **Policy Inconsistency:** There is policy inconsistency and somersault by the government. The recent fuel subsidy removal in the country was ill-thought-out as the government did not plan very well before the removal of the subsidy. Hence, despite the claim that subsidy has been totally removed, the Nigerian government is still paying humongous amounts in fuel subsidy. Successive governments come in with their own agenda and blueprint, discarding existing structures.

Conclusion and Next Steps

There is no doubt that the report of the 4MR themes from the country would further enrich the Global Synthesis Report. The 4MR is vital to track not only progress on the commitments but also the implementation of the SDGs. There is a need, therefore, to make development cooperation effective in order to achieve targets and results at the country level. There is also the compelling need for governments, development partners and other stakeholders to work towards the full achievement of the Busan Effectiveness Principles for an inclusive and sustainable development for all.

ANEEJ would continue consultations and engagement with the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning and the National Coordinator and other stakeholders on the need to conduct the GPEDC 4MR in the country.

BANGLADESH

Report by Coastal Development Partnership

Bangladesh is the 8th most populous country in the world with 168 million population. It is a middle-income country with a per capita income of US\$2,824 in 2022. Its annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth has been increasing to around 7% per year since 2015. The agricultural sector contributes around 17% to the total GDP and employs around 48% of the labor force of the country. The industry sector contributes about 20% of the GDP. Agro-ecologically disadvantaged areas, or areas that are highly exposed to climatic hazards such as severely flooded areas, char land, flash flood prone areas, coastal tidal surge and salinity prone areas and hilly areas, constitute about 41% of the country. Around half of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood.

The ruling party has a monopoly over state institutions, constitutional bodies and most of the civil society. The supreme leader of the ruling party is the source of de facto power. The political culture of Bangladesh is dominated by authoritarian democracy and widespread violence mostly by ruling party members. Political parties, when in opposition, use general strikes and blockades for political gain. Any political debate between political activists or groups always ends up with disagreement or confrontation, if not violence. The ruling party has traditionally used police and security agencies to torture opposition party activists and leaders. Currently, torture of opposition party leaders by the police and security agencies have increased manifold because government is intolerant of any criticism. Local elites control the local development and most of the government initiatives. Every locality is controlled by powerful syndicates linked to ruling political parties. Lack of space for exercising political rights of the opposition parties is very common at the local level.

The government has been increasing its control over civil society and the media through new rules and regulations. Since mainstream media outlets were already facing indirect state control, cyberspace became a major avenue to raise critical voices.

Bangladesh's National Policy on Development Cooperation (NPDC) seeks to navigate the complexities and prospects associated with development assistance. While the country has made notable strides in mobilizing domestic resources, it still acknowledges the vital role of development aid in its economic and social progress. The policy underscores the commitment to international agreements and pledges concerning development effectiveness, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also recognizes the rising significance of the Global South as key contributors to economic and technical cooperation. The Economic Relations Division in the Ministry of Finance is in charge of the government's NPDC.

Assessment of the 4MR status in Bangladesh

The Global Partnership Monitoring is an internationally recognized, partner country-led voluntary monitoring exercise to promote collective accountability concerning the effectiveness of development cooperation. The ongoing fourth monitoring round (4MR) of the Global Partnership will take place between 2023 and 2026. The first three global monitoring rounds took place in 2014, 2016, and 2018. The Global Partnership Monitoring Framework guides the MR to promote collective accountability by measuring progress of development cooperation around four dimensions (whole-of-society, state and use of country systems, transparency and leaving no one behind). The MR is based on the four internationally-agreed four principles of effective development cooperation (country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability). The MR provides a unique opportunity to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue and identify joint solutions to overcome challenges to effective development cooperation.

In the development cooperation context, civil society organizations (CSOs) are particularly important as independent development actors in their own right as well as implementing partners. CSOs through a CSO focal point report on two components of the MR framework: the assessment of the enabling environment for CSOs and the optional Kampala Principles Assessment (KPA) on effective private sector engagement in development cooperation. CSO focal point facilitates the engagement and contributions from civil society in the monitoring, and plays a crucial role in assessing the enabling environment for CSOs and for the KPA, if the government has decided to undertake it. The national coordinator has not yet convened the multistakeholder kick-off meeting at the strategic level.

The 4MR offers active participation for CSO engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogues, action planning and follow-up at the country level. The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) conducted a Training on CSO engagement in the 4MR from December 7 to 8, 2023 in Brussels, Belgium. The CPDE also planned to support country CSOs in engaging an official at the national government level in the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) 4MR process.

Coastal Development Partnership (CDP) is the CPDE's country focal point and designated CSO focal point for the GPEDC 4MR in Bangladesh. During the training, CDP has committed to working with the CPDE over the next 12 months for an effective CSO participation in the fourth monitoring round. The current CDP efforts on CSOs assessment of the 4MR status in Bangladesh is an expression of that commitment as well as the fulfillment of its responsibility as the CSO focal point for consulting CSOs and providing representative CSO views in the official assessments.

The CSOs assessment of the 4MR status in Bangladesh has the following objectives:

1. to encourage active participation of the CSOs in the GPEDC 4MR process of Bangladesh.
2. to assess the current country status of the 4MR themes in Bangladesh.

Methodology for 4MR status assessment

The CSO focal point had organized five consultations in five different areas within the country, namely, Dhaka, Barishal, Bagerhat, Khulna & Jhenaidha, to reach out to diverse types of CSOs. The consultation covered CSOs from 3 big cities and 2 small sub-districts. The small sub-districts were chosen specially to get the voices from the local CSOs who are often excluded in the monitoring exercise. Also, the CSO consultation in Dhaka, the capital city, mainly targeted organizations of persons with disabilities (OPD) to ensure that voices of the persons with disabilities are not left behind.

Representatives from 81 CSOs had expressed their views, which were consolidated into one CSO answer following the GPEDC Monitoring Guide 2023-2026, particularly Annex 4: CSO enabling Environment Questionnaire – Characteristics of Practice. The CSOs from different fields of activity and regions, including CSOs representing marginalized groups, non-government organizations, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, social movements, OPD, women's groups, research institutes and network of CSOs/non-government organizations (NGOs) took part in the consultations.

In addition, 17 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted to seek information, advice and opinion. During the consultative process, the CSO focal point did not only collect input but also shared information with the CSOs about the 4MR process. The preparation of this 4MR country report was guided by the CPDE core questions related to the 4MR themes.

Types of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	Jhenaidah	Khulna	Barishal	Bagerhat	Dhaka
Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)	4	8	6	6	1
Community-Based Organizations	1		1		
Faith-Based Organizations	1		1		
Social Movements	1	3	2	3	
Women's Groups	1	1	3	1	1
Research/Educational/Public Benefit Institutes	3			1	
Professional Associations	5	2	2	2	
Youth Groups	2		1	1	1
Volunteer Groups			1	2	1
Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD)					8
International Non-Government Organizations				1	
Network of NGOs/CSOs		2			1
	18	16	17	17	13
Total CSOs Consulted for 4MR Assessment			81		

Types of Key Informant Interview (KII) Participants									
District	Community-Based Organizations	Faith-Based Organizations	Social Movements	NGOs	Network of NGOs/CSOs	Women's Groups	Organization of Persons with Disabilities	Private Sector	Elected Local Government Representatives
Jhenaidah		1		1				1	1
Barishal	1			1				1	1
Khulna			1	1	1				
Bagerhat			1	1		1			
Dhaka					1		2		
	1	1	2	4	2	1	2	2	2
Total	17								

Status of the 4MR themes

CSOs in Bangladesh have tried the 4MR exercise, which is expected to assess the progress, opportunities, and obstacles related to effective development cooperation using the CPDE core questions as well as the GPEDC monitoring questions related to the components of the 4MR themes. The evidence generated from the CSO consultations are grouped around the 4MR thematic areas: whole-of-society, state and use of country systems, transparency, and leaving no one behind.

1. Whole of society

The term “whole-of-society” refers to an approach that involves the inclusive and equitable participation of all actors of society in the development process. Effective development cooperation recognizes the whole-of-society as a development approach. The engagement of the subnational governments, parliaments, CSOs, the private sector, foundations, and trade unions in the development process is limited and depends on government likings or preference. In this context, it can be envisaged that the “whole-of-society” is not adopted in the development cooperation approach.

Engagement and dialogue

The existing engagement and dialogue practices have limited stakeholders’ engagement, are often by-invitation only, and generally structured to endorse government plans & strategies. Typically, CSOs participate in steering committee meetings of various ministries as well as district and subdistrict coordination meetings. In general, the CSOs do not have much expectation that their views or recommendations will be seriously considered by the government.

Parliamentary oversight

Information on official development cooperation is shared with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, when requested. Only development cooperation data on national budgets are subject to parliamentary review.

Enabling environment for CSOs

The government exercises an explicit monopoly over CSOs. The government actively represses those who attempt to defy its monopoly on political activity. The government legal and regulatory framework is affecting the enabling environment for CSOs and, with the reporting requirements of the development partners, generally drives the accountability mechanisms for CSOs.

COMPONENTS	QUESTIONS	CSOs VIEWS ON GPEDC SCALE	CSOs SCORE
Space for CSO Dialogue on National Development Policies	To what extent does the government consult CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies?	Level 2: Occasional consultations, but the quality of consultation is poor	3 out of 10
	In the context of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to what extent does the government consult CSOs in the prioritization, implementation and monitoring of the SDGs?	Level 2: Some selected CSOs are occasionally being consulted around SDG mainstreaming, implementation and monitoring.	3 out of 10
	To what extent do CSOs have the right in law and in practice to access relevant government information for effective participation in consultations	Level 2: Right to access may exist in law, but there are very significant limitations in the law and/or in its implementation	4 out of 10
	To what extent have the results of recent consultations with CSOs informed government design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies?	Level 2: Consultations with CSOs take place, but none or only minor comments are normally taken on board.	3 out of 10
	Overall Score	Level 2	3.25 out of 10
Legal, Regulatory and Political Environment	With respect to the right to freedom of assembly, to what extent does the legal and regulatory framework enable CSOs to exercise these rights in law and in practice?	Level 3: Most peaceful assemblies are allowed in law and practice, although some issues or groups may be subject to discriminatory decision making	5 out of 10
	With respect to the right to freedom of expression, to what extent does the legal and regulatory framework enable CSOs to exercise these rights in law and in practice?	Level 2: Expression by CSOs and their members is extensively controlled by the government, but some alternative media exist.	3 out of 10
	With respect to the freedom of association, to what extent does the legal and regulatory framework enable in law and practice CSO formation, registration and operation?	Level 1: Registration is mandatory, difficult, lengthy, costly and required periodically.	2 out of 10
	To what extent does the legal and regulatory environment facilitate access to resources for domestic CSOs?	Level 2: Access to either national or international resources is possible, but is subject to government restrictions.	5 out of 10
	Overall Score	Level 2	3.75 out of 10

Space for CSO Dialogue on National Development Policies:

The government invites only a few selected CSOs to the consultation. Also, consultations take place at stages when change in decisions or directions is virtually impossible in the design, implementation and monitoring of national development policies. In most cases, comments or feedback provided by CSOs are not seriously considered. The government has been carrying out ad hoc and occasional consultations with select CSOs around the SDGs. CSOs' access to most relevant information in practice differs among government departments and CSOs' relationship with the government departments.

Legal, Regulatory and Political Environment:

Peaceful assemblies are allowed but are subject to a notification procedure with a few days' advance notice and most spontaneous assemblies, except for small groups, are not allowed. Law enforcement often uses disproportionate physical means leading to serious injuries to participants, including widespread arrests, and/or uses the criminal system against peaceful protesters. CSOs cannot criticize the government without fear of government sanctions or harassment. Civil society members who criticize power holders risk surveillance, harassment, intimidation, and imprisonment. The CSO registration process is lengthy, which lasts from 6 months to a year or more, burdensome, involves multiple authorities and often requires sensitive personal information. CSOs can do their registration with various governmental departments but they must often pay bribes to officials involved in the registration process. Government officials have broad discretion to inspect the activities and finances of CSOs. CSOs receiving international resources must obtain special registration with a particular body, which monitors the flow of resources to CSOs and have to receive case-by-case approval to access funds. In general, CSOs do not benefit from tax exemptions.

COMPONENTS	QUESTIONS	CSOs VIEWS ON GPEDC SCALE	CSOs SCORE
Development Partner Support for CSO Enabling Environment	To what extent do development partners consult CSOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of their development cooperation policies and programmes?	Level 2: Consultations with CSOs in this country are occasional and limited to some individual development partners and selected CSOs and focus only on the implementation of donor programs.	3 out of 10
	To what extent is the promotion of an enabling environment for CSOs (e.g. political, financial, legal and policy aspects) an agenda item in development partners' policy dialogue with the government?	Level 2: Some development partners occasionally include some elements of the enabling environment agenda as an item in their policy dialogue with the government, particularly if CSOs lobby on specific issues.	3 out of 10
	To what extent is development partner financial support maximizing sustainable engagement of CSOs in all aspects of development?	Level 1: Development partner funding tends to focus on implementing the development partners' own programming priorities through unpredictable calls for proposals and funding opportunities, with very limited transparency and/or possibility to influence for CSOs in partner countries.	2 out of 10
	To what extent do development partners make available information about their CSO support to the public, including to the government?	Level 2: Some development partners make available aggregate information on their support to CSOs at the country level.	4 out of 10
	Overall Score	Level 2	3 out of 10

Development Partner Support for CSO Enabling Environment:

There is no coordinated process for development partners to consult with a diversity of CSOs. There are very limited opportunities for CSOs to engage in the design, implementation and monitoring of development cooperation policies and programmes of the development partners. Sometimes, development partners respond to CSO lobbying on specific issues. The domestic CSOs have no opportunities to influence development partners' funding priorities and mechanisms. The large national NGOs and the international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) capture most of the funding from development partners. Almost all small domestic CSOs/NGOs receive funding as subcontractors through the large NGOs or INGOs based in development partner countries. The domestic CSOs/NGOs do not receive any direct institutional core support from development partners. The development partner's own programming interests and country priorities guide the funding priorities and mechanisms.

Transparency in Development Partners' Support for CSOs:

Some development partners make available aggregate information on their support to CSOs at country level through reports on their websites, which may include geographical or thematic information, but not activity-level or beneficiary-level information.

COMPONENTS	QUESTIONS	CSOs VIEWS ON GPEDC SCALE	CSOs SCORE
CSO Development Effectiveness - Accountability and Transparency	To what extent are partnerships equitable and based on mutual interest between financing CSOs and their CSO partners?	Level 1: Most domestic CSOs experience short term, often one-off, project relationships, which are sole expressions of the financing CSO programming interests.	1 out of 10
	To what extent do CSOs participate in CSO-initiated co-ordination, including mechanisms (e.g. platforms, networks, associations) that facilitate CSOs engagement in policy dialogue and/or co-ordination among CSOs at national or sectoral level?	Level 1: No national platforms. CSO co-ordination mechanisms are largely ad hoc and have short-term project-oriented goals.	2 out of 10
	To what extent are CSOs implementing their development work guided by international human rights standards and principles? (e.g. human rights based approaches)	Level 2: CSOs in the country generally have policies and programs guided by international human rights standards and principles, but the evidence of consistent external and internal practice is minimal and only among a few large CSOs.	3 out of 10
	To what extent are CSOs aligning with CSO-led accountability mechanisms to address CSOs' transparency and multiple accountabilities?	Level 2: CSO accountability mechanisms are under discussion through a representative CSO platform.	2 out of 10
	Overall Score	Level 1	2 out of 10

CSO Development Effectiveness - Accountability and Transparency

Partnership between financing CSOs and Domestic CSOs: The partnership between financing CSOs and domestic CSOs are unpredictable, irregular and very short-term. The partnership is mainly based on the implementation of financing CSO projects by the domestic CSOs. Their relationship is generally defined by the fiduciary reporting requirements imposed by the financing CSO. The financing CSOs, as development partners, determine the content and terms of partnership relationships using the back-donor terms and conditions for financing CSOs. Only a few domestic CSOs have long-term partnership relationships (5-10 years) with the financing CSOs that are based on shared programming interests and solidarity.

CSO-initiated coordination mechanisms: There is no national CSO platform through which the government can engage with CSOs in policy or programmatic dialogue at the national level. Several CSO platforms often compete with each other for participation in policy dialogue prioritized by government and development partners.

CSOs implementing human rights-based approaches in their development work: Most local CSOs working in the country do not have explicit policies intended to guide their own development practice and programmes based on human rights-based approaches.

CSO-led accountability mechanisms: CSOs in Bangladesh are accountable to their constituencies, their governing body, financial partners and government regulatory bodies. Individual CSOs maintain accountability and basic transparency through their own efforts and use annual reports and audit reports as key public accountability mechanisms. Majority of CSOs make their basic organizational information available on their website. National level CSOs who have linkages with regional or global CSO networks also voluntarily try to adopt international accountability mechanisms and processes for NGOs. As compliance, CSOs regularly report to different tiers of government.

Private sector engagement in development cooperation/Kampala Principles Assessment: The KPA collects evidence on the status of private sector engagement in development cooperation at the country level, as part of the whole-of-society dimension of the GPEDC monitoring framework. As the government has not yet declared their intention about the KPA, the 4MR assessment has not collected data on KPA.

2. State and use of country systems

Planning: Since 2015, the government has been aligning development planning with the national budgetary frameworks and SDGs. The national five-year plan uses a development results framework. Most of the national development strategies, plans and policies are publicly available and accessible online.

Respect country's policy space: The use of the country's public financial management (PFM) system has been increasing among the development partners systems.

Public financial management: According to the GPEDC 3MR report, Bangladesh experienced an overall decline in the quality of its PFM systems.

Gender budgeting: In Bangladesh, allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment are made public. Also, Bangladesh tracks allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment to meet the requirements of SDG indicator 5.c.1. In addition, the PFM systems promote gender-related goals and targets.

Accountability mechanisms: Bangladesh has institutionalized a dedicated Development Effectiveness Wing under the Economic Relations Division at the Ministry of Finance to coordinate with development partners through the Local Consultative Group. The Government of Bangladesh and development cooperation providers meet at the annual Bangladesh Development Forum to review progress made on the Joint Co-operation Strategy. Bangladesh has yet to approve the draft policy for development cooperation. CSOs, the private sector and subnational governments are still excluded from the evaluation process.

Information management: The national Aid Information Management System (AIMS) collects the development cooperation information. Development partners use AIMS.

3. Transparency

Bangladesh has improved in making development cooperation related information publicly available. Although most development partners have a country strategy, not all of them are making their strategy publicly available online. Development cooperation uses government data and statistics for monitoring; and involves government in evaluations.

Domestic CSOs are generally not aware of global portals to access data on development cooperation. Very few domestic CSOs are accessing AIMS or using OECD DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee). Neither government nor development partners are taking proactive action to address this issue. There is no clear and consistent mechanism for governmental bodies to provide development cooperation related information to citizens.

4. Leaving No One Behind

Local CSOs are always left behind in any consultation related to development cooperation. CSOs that deal with human rights, democracy and good governance have been experiencing bureaucratic harassment in their renewal of registration and the delayed approval for foreign support in the country.

CSOs have acknowledged that disaggregated data by income class, gender, and geographic location is available for monitoring SDGs but they are not aware of such data for monitoring development cooperation.

Lessons and Challenges

- The government and development partners often fail to realize that the scope and roles of CSOs in development are distinct from those of the government and development partners.
- The Cyber Security Act has impeded the effective functioning of CSOs by endowing the government with extensive punitive powers. Since its inception on October 1, 2018, the Digital Security Act (DSA) of 2018 has been the tool of choice for the government and its supporters to muzzle dissenting voices, restrict the freedom of expression of CSOs, and debilitate civil society organizations. The DSA was revised to the Cyber Security Act (CSA) in 2023, which includes a peculiar clause permitting anyone to initiate legal action if they believe another person has been defamed or insulted. Furthermore, the CSA empowers law enforcement to detain individuals, conduct searches, and confiscate equipment without a warrant, based merely on the suspicion of a crime being committed via social media. The act also enables the government to mandate the removal or blocking of any online information or data as it deems necessary, thus broadly curtailing the voices of critics and those disseminating information about human rights abuses within the nation. Consequently, CSOs have become reticent to engage in advocacy that could contest governmental actions.
- Numerous local CSOs rely on government support for their existence or necessitate backing from local elites, particularly leaders of the ruling political party. Due to the decline in foreign donations for development work in recent years, NGOs are increasingly turning to microcredit as a financial source for their social development initiatives. Advocacy-focused NGOs are fully or partly dependent on foreign funding sources.
- The short-term project-based funding mechanisms limit CSOs' ability to retain full-time, qualified staff. Besides, current funding modalities for CSOs are reducing civil society actors to development contractors.

- Inequitable partnerships are very common between financing CSOs and implementing CSOs. Power inequalities between financing CSOs and domestic CSOs are too wide. Recently, financing CSOs are not building formal partnerships with CSOs that do not have the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) registration.
- The fund disbursement to CSOs by the government and international development partners is expected to be reduced due to the graduation of Bangladesh from the least developed country (LDC) category to middle income country. According to a study titled 'Role of CSOs and NGOs in LDC Graduation of Bangladesh: opportunities and challenges' by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, the disbursement of official development assistance to the Bangladeshi CSOs declined by 11.3% between 2015-2020.
- Government does not respect CSOs as development actors "in their own right" because most development partners are not sincerely facilitating an enabling environment for CSOs in Bangladesh.
- Government and development actors have challenged CSOs to demonstrate progress in their own development effectiveness in areas of equitable partnerships, accountability and transparency.
- CSOs are subject to unreasonable government control because they have to keep pleasing government officials from the local to the national level for their operations. Government does not allow CSOs to engage in a participatory process to shape the national development strategy but rather entangles CSOs in compliance measures. Registered CSOs must submit an annual report and audited accounts to the registration authority. This authority has the power to inspect, approve amendments to the memorandum of association, and, in cases of financial irregularity or compliance failure, suspend the governing body and appoint an administrator or a caretaker body.

The activities of NGOs or CSOs are overseen by the local administration on behalf of the NGOAB and by the local Social Services Office on behalf of the Department of Social Services. NGOs are required to submit various reports, including annual reports and audited financial statements, to these local offices. Additionally, NGOs participate in monthly NGO Coordination Meetings led by the Deputy Commissioner or Upazila Nirbahi Officer and present progress reports on their activities. Local administration officers occasionally visit NGO project activities. Additionally, NGOs are required to participate in various social awareness programs conducted by the local administration and the Social Services Office.

Conclusion and Next Steps

There should be a representative national CSO platform for unifying CSOs to adopt the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness to enhance their own development effectiveness, transparency and accountability. This platform should certify development effectiveness, transparency and accountability practices within the CSO community.

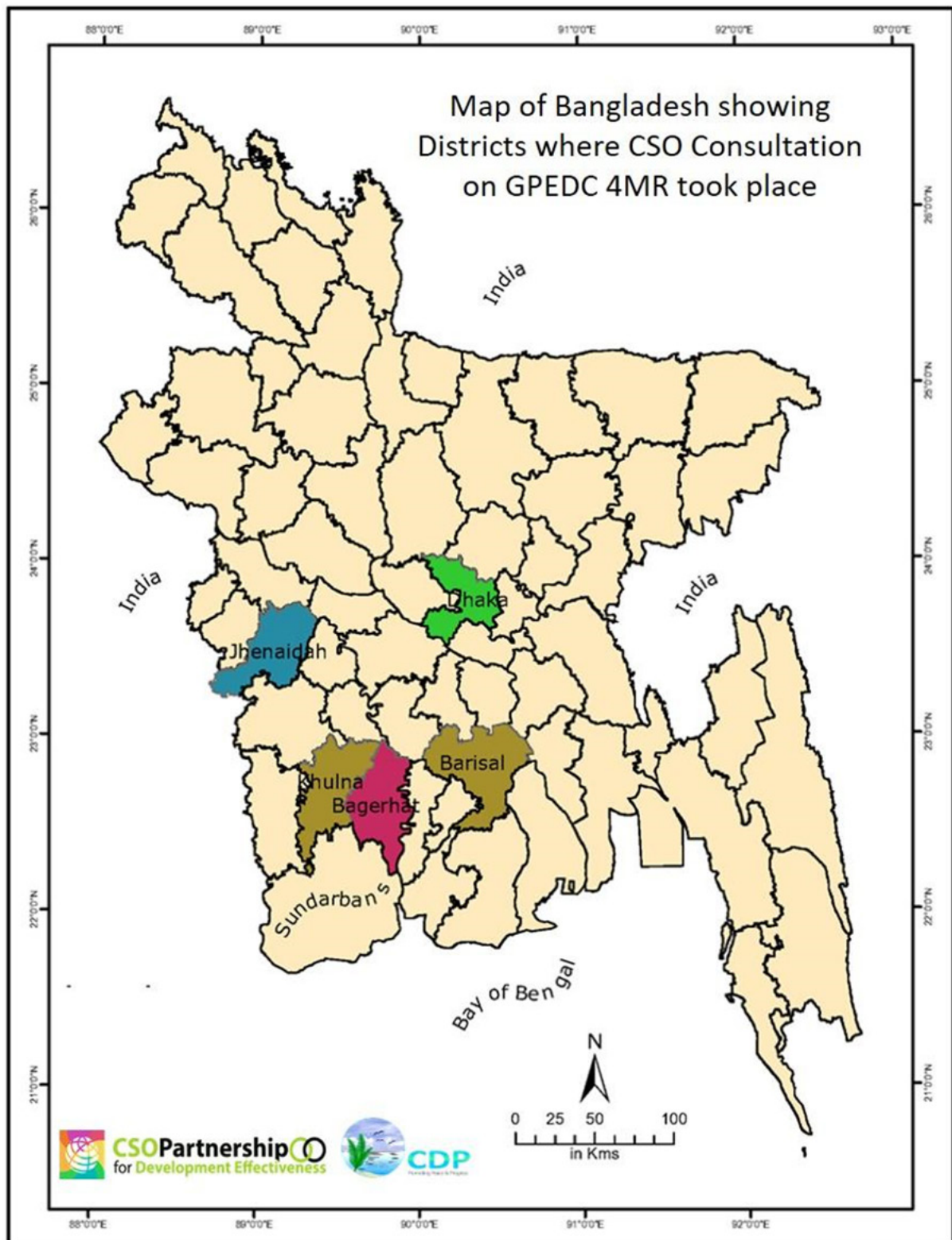
Development partners' financial support to CSOs should be based on the CSOs' proposals derived from their own objectives and partnerships, and not by objectives defined through the priorities of a given development partner. Development partners' financing modalities should strengthen core or institutional funding mechanisms for CSO sustainability. The simplification and harmonization of funding requirements between development partners may increase access to funding for a diversity of CSOs.

Almost all CSOs suggested that consultation practice needs substantial improvements. CSOs should have full access to relevant, comprehensive information, with sufficient time of 2 to 4 weeks to prepare for participation in consultations. There should also be a mechanism so that CSOs can request for additional information if needed.

The government should establish a clear selection criteria, which are open, transparent and unrestricted, to invite CSOs for any consultation.

Development partners should create regular and planned opportunities to engage with CSOs. They should also create opportunities for CSOs to engage their government on enabling environment issues and should support domestic civil society organizations in monitoring enabling environment issues.

Annex 1: Map of the consultation areas



Annex 2: Photographs of the Consultations



CSO Consultation on GPEDC 4MR
in Bagerhat District



CSO Consultation on GPEDC 4MR
in Dhaka



CSO Consultation on GPEDC 4MR
in Khulna





*CSO Consultation on GPEDC 4MR
in Jhenaidah*



*CSO Consultation on GPEDC 4MR
in Barishal*

The 4th Monitoring Round of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) for the Nepal Chapter was a pivotal gathering aimed at enhancing and understanding effective development cooperation within Nepal. The workshop was guided by two primary objectives: understanding Nepal's current position in GPEDC indicators and fostering discussions to bolster the effective implementation and monitoring of GPEDC objectives. The GPEDC, established in 2011 in Busan, Korea, serves as a cornerstone for global development cooperation. It seeks to maximize the impact of all forms of cooperation for the shared benefits of people, the planet, prosperity and peace. The GPEDC brings together diverse stakeholders, including governments, development partners, civil society, the private sector, and representatives from parliaments and trade unions.

The 4th Monitoring Round of the GPEDC for the Nepal Chapter began on August 9, 2023, with a strategic-level kick-off meeting convened by the then national coordinator, Dr. Narayan Dhakal, who served as the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Finance of Nepal until April 2024. He held the pivotal role of arranging national efforts towards effective development cooperation. This meeting marked the formal initiation of the monitoring exercise, setting the tone for a collaborative and inclusive approach to Nepal's development agenda.

The kick-off event convened a diverse group of development stakeholders, encompassing government dignitaries, civil society, private sector representatives, trade unions, and development partners. Mr. Shreekrishna Nepal, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, set the tone with his opening address, accentuating Nepal's continued commitment to the GPEDC's core principles: country ownership, results-driven focus, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and accountability. He voiced optimism that Nepal's participation in this monitoring round will fortify the nation's development coordination landscape. He also highlighted the collective ambition to ensure that every facet of development cooperation benefits Nepal's citizens.

In a video message, Mr. Vitalice Meja, Executive Director of Reality of Aid Africa & Non-Executive GPEDC Co-Chair, said, "...civil society organizations (CSOs) have an indispensable role to play in ensuring the most effective and accountable use of development cooperation resources. The private sector is pivotal in job creation, alleviating poverty, ensuring societal equity and sustainability, and offering financing and investment opportunities." Dr. Dhakal and Mr. Leigh Mitchell, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Chief Technical Adviser, presented insights into the GPEDC's history and evolving monitoring framework. Presentations highlighted the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue and emphasized the distinct roles of various entities. These include civil society organizations and the private sector, each recognized as independent development actors.

Together, they play a pivotal role in pinpointing joint solutions and addressing challenges to effective development cooperation. Their presentations also touched upon the potential of private sector participation in addressing global challenges, achieving the 2030 Agenda, and promoting sustainable development, especially for underserved communities. Subsequent dialogues centered on the challenges and achievements of the civil society and private sectors in advancing Nepal's sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Initial planning and coordination meeting

An initial planning and coordination meeting for the 4th Monitoring Round of the GPEDC for the Nepal Chapter was held in January 2024, convened by the national coordinator, Dr. Narayan Dhakal. This meeting ensured a well-structured and inclusive approach to development cooperation in Nepal and laid the groundwork for the entire monitoring exercise with the following timeline and key components:

January 2024: Initial Planning and Coordination

- Objective: Establish core teams and conduct initial stakeholder consultations to outline objectives and key deliverables.
- Activities: Formation of core teams including representatives from government, CSOs, private sector, and development partners. Initial stakeholder consultations to understand the landscape and set the objectives for the monitoring round. Development of a comprehensive plan detailing the timeline and milestones.

February - March 2024: Detailed Roadmap Development

- Objective: Develop a detailed roadmap for the implementation of the monitoring exercise.
- Activities: Workshops and meetings to develop a step-by-step roadmap. Identification of key activities, deliverables, and responsible parties. Finalization and dissemination of the roadmap to all stakeholders.

April - June 2024: Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis

- Objective: Collect and analyze data from various sectors to understand the current state of development cooperation.
- Activities: Systematic collection of data from government databases, CSO reports, and international datasets. Preliminary analysis to identify gaps and areas of improvement. Regular updates and feedback sessions with stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and accuracy.

July - September 2024: Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

- Objective: Engage with identified stakeholders to review preliminary findings and incorporate their feedback.
- Activities: Organization of multi-stakeholder forums and workshops. Presentation of preliminary findings and collection of feedback. Incorporation of stakeholder feedback into the final analysis.

October - December 2024: Final Reporting and Dissemination

- Objective: Compile the final report, disseminate results, and plan for subsequent action steps.
- Activities: Compilation and finalization of the monitoring report. Dissemination of the report through various channels including public forums and media platforms. Development of an action plan based on the report's findings to guide future development cooperation efforts.

The meeting's success was ensured by the active participation of diverse stakeholders, each playing a crucial role:

Government Representatives: Ministry of Finance and Planning led policy alignment and ensured the use of country systems.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): Advocated for community needs and facilitated inclusive dialogues.

Private Sector: Provided insights on economic development and facilitated public-private partnerships.

Development Partners: Offered financial support and technical assistance.

Academia and Researchers: Ensured methodological rigor and analytical support.

Local Governments: Implemented development projects and aligned national strategies with local needs.

During the kick-off meeting, a thorough review of Nepal's national development plans and strategies was prioritized. It focused on aligning the GPEDC monitoring exercise with the nation's overarching development goals, warranting coherence and strategic integration.

Key plans and strategies reviewed included:

The Constitution of Nepal 2015: Serving as the foundational legal framework, emphasizing the country's long-term vision of a prosperous, independent, and socialism-oriented Nepal with happy, healthy, and educated citizens.

Vision 2043: This long-term strategy aims to develop universally accessible quality and modern infrastructure, increase productivity and decent employment, and focus on sustainable economic growth.

The Fifteenth Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24): This plan focuses on strengthening democratic governance within the federal system, building quality infrastructure, and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Net-zero Emissions Strategy by 2045: Aligning development efforts with environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

The kick-off meeting emphasized the importance of reviewing and strengthening institutionalized mechanisms to ensure effective development cooperation. Key mechanisms included:

Aid Information Management System (AIMS): Used for tracking ongoing and off-budget projects, although it was noted that updates were infrequent.

Public Financial Management (PFM) Systems: Benchmarked against the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability framework to enhance financial management quality.

Debt Management Systems and Financial Management Systems: Identified as areas needing further development and regular updates for efficiency.

The meeting identified existing platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue, highlighting their roles in fostering inclusive discussions and collaborative decision-making. These platforms included:

National Multi-Stakeholder Consultation Forums: Facilitating dialogue between government, civil society, private sector, and development partners.

Sectoral Working Groups: Focused on specific development sectors to ensure detailed and targeted discussions.

Public Hearings and Audits: Engaging citizens directly in governance processes to enhance transparency and accountability.

The kick-off meeting reviewed existing policies and processes that guide development cooperation, focusing on areas that require improvement for more effective implementation. Key policies and processes discussed included:

Good Governance Act 2064 and Right to Information Act 2064: Ensuring transparency and accountability in governance.

Anti-money Laundering Act 2070 and Public Procurement Act 2063: Strengthening financial integrity and procurement practices.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting: Promoting gender equality through dedicated tracking and publicizing of gender-related initiatives.

The kick-off meeting identified key sources of information and data necessary for the effective monitoring of development cooperation efforts. These sources included:

Government Databases: Central repositories for national statistics and development data.

CSO Reports and Research Publications: Providing insights into civil society perspectives and grassroots-level data.

International Datasets: Global datasets and benchmarks from organizations such as the United Nations, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank.

Aid Information Management System (AIMS): Despite its need for more frequent updates, AIMS remains a critical tool for tracking aid and development projects.

The GPEDC and the SDGs

At the heart of the GPEDC's mission is its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. The partnership demonstrates its impact by strengthening effective support to statistical capacity and data, crucial for evidence-based policymaking. The GPEDC prioritizes the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda through various avenues:

- Private sector engagement
- Effective triangular and south-south cooperation
- Civil society and foundations' engagement
- Effective cooperation at subnational and multilateral levels

The GPEDC supports the achievement of the 2030 Agenda by fostering better partnerships and mobilizing resources effectively. The partnership supports a voluntary, country-led, and multi-stakeholder process to track implementation through ten key indicators, using monitoring results for dialogue and action.

GPEDC Monitoring & Nepal

Participation in the GPEDC monitoring exercise offers Nepal a platform to share its country-led progress on global development cooperation commitments. It allows Nepal to track progress, benchmark against partner countries, and learn from international experiences. The monitoring results reflect Nepal's progress in various areas:

- Strengthening the national results framework
- Development partners' use of country systems
- Enabling environment for civil society
- Quality of public-private dialogue
- Transparency and mutual accountability

Nepal's participation ensures its context is reflected in global analysis, informing ongoing policy dialogue on effective development cooperation. The GPEDC monitoring process is a partner country-led initiative promoting collective accountability. It drives behavior change by focusing on how stakeholders' partner at the country level for better development results.

The New Monitoring Framework

The new monitoring promotes collective accountability through four thematic areas aligned with the four effectiveness principles:

- **Whole-of-Society:** Inclusion of diverse stakeholders in the development process
- **State and Use of Country Systems:** Alignment and utilization of country core systems for development cooperation
- **Transparency:** Actions taken to ensure transparency in development cooperation
- **Leaving No One Behind:** Consultation and targeting of all groups in development cooperation with available disaggregated data

The workshop witnessed an impressive turnout of various stakeholders, underscoring the importance and urgency of shaping Nepal's development cooperation strategy. Representatives from civil society, researchers, young student politicians, and experts from different fields came together, bringing a rich tapestry of perspectives to the table. This diverse participation was instrumental in ensuring the workshop's success, fostering a holistic and inclusive dialogue.

The inaugural session was marked by a comprehensive presentation by Swastik Pandey, delving into the intricacies of the GPEDC and its relevance in the Nepalese context. The presentation set the tone for the day, grounding participants in Nepal's current position in terms of development indicators and international cooperation. The 4th Monitoring Round of the GPEDC - Nepal Chapter workshop showcased Nepal's commitment to effective development cooperation. It provided a collaborative platform for stakeholders to share insights, discuss challenges, and strategize solutions. As Nepal continues its development journey, such workshops play a pivotal role in shaping an inclusive, transparent, and effective development landscape aligned with global best practices and national priorities.

1. Whole-of-society

The whole-of-society approach highlights the importance of inclusivity and collaboration in development cooperation. It emphasizes engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, including subnational governments, parliaments, CSOs, the private sector, foundations, and trade unions.

Key Question

A pivotal question arises from this whole-of-society approach: To what extent are diverse stakeholders included in Nepal's development process? Reflecting on this question prompts a deeper understanding of inclusivity, collaboration, and partnership among various stakeholders. It encourages continuous efforts to ensure that subnational governments, parliaments, CSOs, the private sector, foundations, and trade unions are actively engaged and contribute meaningfully to Nepal's development journey.

Engagement and Dialogue

The government and development partners in Nepal are progressively involving diverse stakeholders in formulating national development strategies. Through inclusive dialogues, these stakeholders participate in discussions on development priorities, results, and joint assessments towards achieving development cooperation targets. This inclusive approach fosters collective ownership and ensures that development strategies reflect the needs and aspirations of all segments of society. The activities of the development partners go through the top-down approach; after federalism attempts to decentralize development have been widely seen, at the local level, public consultations are necessary before initiating any project.

However, at the federal level, the parliamentarians aim to form policies that help address the problems of the country. Engagements in the national level are mostly of the parliamentarians, but at some points in the past, the parliamentarians didn't have enough research on the subject. Likewise, there is no mechanism through which the stakeholders can comment on the policies and legalities with the parliament.

However, the Ministry of Finance appointed a National Coordinator for the GPEDC. The national coordinator is crucial for forming dialogues and rapports to follow in the future. They are also present in the multi-stakeholder consultation. But the major problem remains in the identification of the stakeholders. Also, the gap between the public and the government seems to be widening, despite significant involvement, engagement and dialogue, sometimes omitting the ideas of the minorities.

Parliamentary Oversight

In Nepal, there is a commitment to transparency and accountability in development cooperation. Countries regularly provide information on development cooperation to the parliament, ensuring that development efforts are recorded in the national budget. This parliamentary oversight enhances accountability and promotes informed decision-making, aligning development cooperation with national priorities.

The parliamentary oversight is seen in Nepal's context. In the formation of the budget, development cooperation is considered effectively. Only based upon the oversight of the parliament, large scale aids get entry inside the country. Altogether a total of 1245 projects have been operating in Nepal until 2024. These projects need careful supervision from the parliament.

The Aid Information Management System showcases that the aid received by Nepal has been on a sectoral basis with the maximum received in the field of health from 2010-2024. One crucial concern is that there have been huge commitments of finances in the past but their disbursements take a huge gap. This showcases that the parliamentarians aren't committed towards securing grants once they get finalized in a commitment. Regular supervision is a necessary indicator for parliamentary oversight.

CSO Enabling Environment

The enabling environment for CSOs in Nepal has witnessed improvements, attributed to collaborative efforts by the government, development partners, and CSOs themselves. These enhancements create a conducive environment for CSOs to operate effectively, contribute to policy dialogues, and engage in development initiatives that align with national priorities.

The CSOs are the forebearers of change in Nepal. They have been effectively aligning towards strengthening democracy. The environment for CSOs looks good on a quantitative metric as many policies have been brought into action. But the gap lies in the effective implementation. Ever since the rise of neoliberal populism in Nepal, it has become difficult to identify the proper agenda. The populist agenda helps divide the people, which has been effectively used against CSOs for populist gain. The CSOs should be responsible for agency building and working for collaborative change. However their divided nature has also declined the civic space, ultimately weakening the democratic voice.

Kedar Khadka, the president and pioneer of GoGo Foundation, mentions that the government's recent effort to bring CSOs under the taxation framework has helped in creating a targeted attack on the civic space. This has elevated problems where CSOs can't sell any sort of physical properties and have raised issues of inventory and dumping. During the time as prime minister of Sher Bahadur Deuba, the CSOs were obstructed from agenda building at a prominent location but the issue shortly got discontinued after the change in leadership. This showcases that the enabling environment for CSOs changes according to the country's leadership.

Private Sector Engagement

The Kampala Principles Assessment serves as a foundation for private sector engagement (PSE) in Nepal's development cooperation. Countries and development partners have established a policy framework that builds on a consultative process to identify PSE priorities and roles. Inclusive and relevant multi-stakeholder dialogues are organized to facilitate PSE partnerships in development cooperation. These partnerships aim to deliver transparent and accountable development outcomes, leveraging the private sector's expertise and resources to drive sustainable development.

Private sector engagement is essential for development cooperation. The government closely sits with the private sector such as the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry to understand the problems faced by the private sector and to smoothen commerce and industry. In order to have a grasp of societal and business affairs, the private sector regularly updates the government. However, the findings from the discussions aren't shared to the general public. Despite the availability of information, the major problem relies on the accessibility of data.

2. State and Use of Country Systems

The State and Use of Country Systems is a critical dimension in the Monitoring Framework 3.0, underscoring the importance of leveraging and strengthening national systems for effective development cooperation. This section delves into the key components that shape the landscape of development cooperation in Nepal.

Key Question

Reflecting on the State and Use of Country Systems, a key question emerges: What is the state of Nepal's core systems for development cooperation, and how do development partners align and utilize them? This question prompts introspection and underscores the importance of synergizing efforts, fostering collaboration, and leveraging national systems to enhance the effectiveness and impact of development cooperation in Nepal.

Planning

Quality national development planning forms the bedrock of Nepal's development strategy. The emphasis is on respecting the country's policy space, allowing for the formulation of development plans that align with national priorities and aspirations. Development partners are encouraged to use country-owned results frameworks and planning tools, such as SDG 17.5.1, ensuring coherence and alignment with Nepal's development vision.

Nepal's national development vision and plans form an overarching structure guided by the Constitution of Nepal 2015. The long-term vision 2043 sought out by Nepal is to have 'a prosperous, independent, and socialism-oriented Nepal with happy, healthy and educated citizens.' This long-term strategy is also boosted by the Fifteenth Plan which aims to build universally accessible, quality, and modern infrastructure, increasing productivity and decent employment focusing on sustainable economic growth.

The second aim it poses is to strengthen the democratic governance in the federal governance system. Likewise, Nepal also has a long-term strategy for Net-zero Emissions by the year 2045. These plans are effectively prioritized in the receiving of the grants. The Development Cooperation Report 2022 also specifies that most of the grants are received according to the agenda of social justice and socialism.

These plans form a bedrock for the implementation of the policies, but the most important thing is the implementation of these plans and policies. For the plans, the government conducts a multi-stakeholder analysis and only then proceeds with the planning. The plans, despite being one of the best in South Asia, fail to get properly implemented, as there is no proper check and balance mechanism.

Respect for Country's Policy Space

An integral aspect of effective development cooperation is the respect for the policy space of the partner country. This principle guarantees that Nepal retains the autonomy to design and implement its development policies and strategies according to its national priorities and context. Respecting Nepal's policy space involves:

- **Alignment with National Priorities:** Development partners must align their assistance with Nepal's national development plans, such as the Vision 2043, Fifteenth Plan, and the Net-zero Emissions Strategy by 2045 to make sure that external support bolsters Nepal's strategic objectives rather than imposing external agendas.
- **Use of Country Systems:** Encouraging the use of Nepal's own systems for planning, budgeting, procurement, and monitoring promotes sustainability and capacity building. For instance, the Aid Information Management System (AIMS) and the Public Financial Management (PFM) systems are pivotal in tracking and managing aid effectively.

- **Support for Local Institutions:** Building the capacities of local institutions to manage development resources fosters long-term sustainability, such as enhancing the capabilities of the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, and other relevant bodies to ensure they can effectively oversee and implement development initiatives.

- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Development cooperation must be flexible to adapt to Nepal's evolving needs and circumstances, like understanding local contexts and being responsive to changes, such as political shifts or emerging development challenges.

- **Promoting Ownership and Inclusivity:** Ensuring that development projects are driven by local needs and priorities, and involve wide-ranging stakeholder engagement, including government bodies, civil society, and the private sector, is crucial, eventually promoting ownership and ensures that development outcomes are sustainable and inclusive.

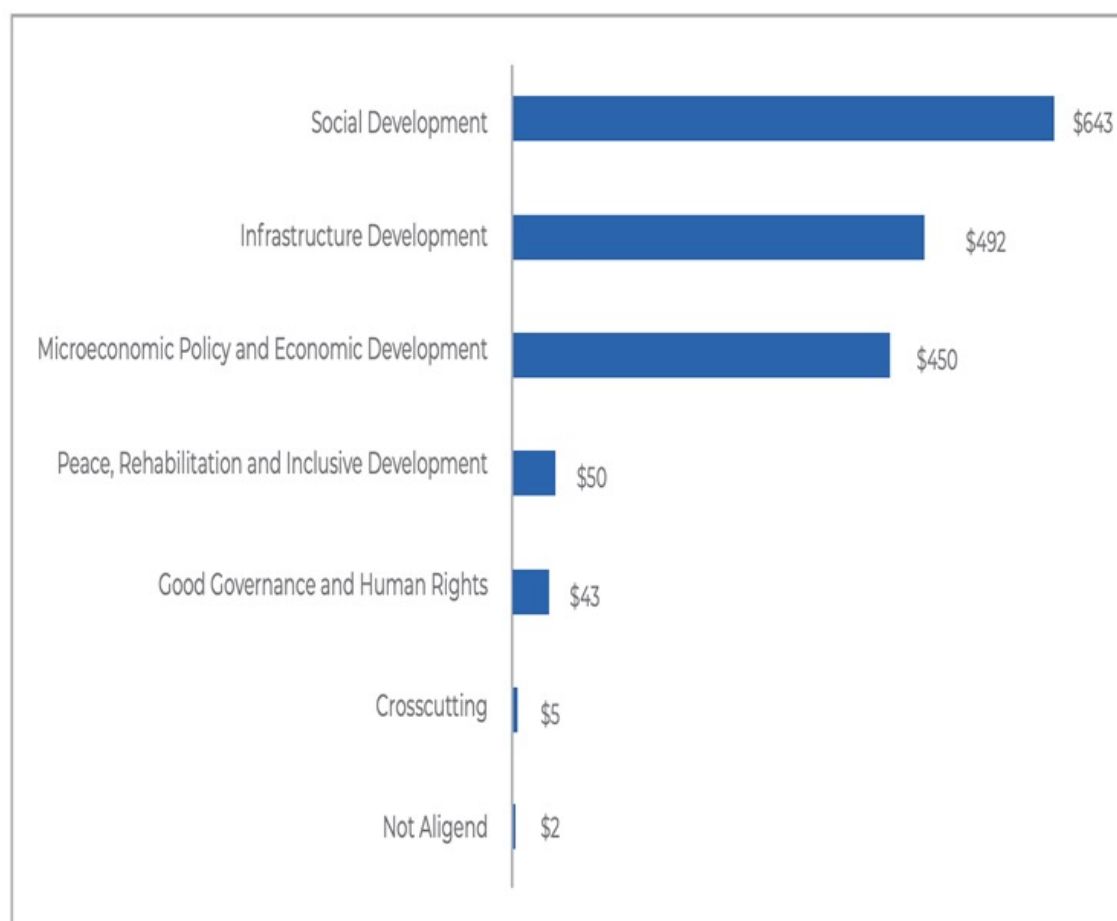


Figure 1: ODA disbursement by sectoral pillars as per the 15th plan

Public Financial Management

Nepal is committed to enhancing the quality of its Public Financial Management (PFM) systems, benchmarked against the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability framework. Strengthening PFM systems is a priority, and development partners are encouraged to channel funding through partner country PFM systems, reinforcing trust and transparency in financial management. Nepal's Ministry of Finance, in order to improve the effectiveness of aid, has created the Aid Information Management System (AIMS). The AIMS provides the list of ongoing and on- or off-budget projects.

However, the AIMS doesn't get regularly updated. For the efficacy, the AIMS only shows the update and the major ideas are represented in the Development Cooperation Report published by the ministry, but no update has been found after 2022. The Debt Management System, Financial Management Systems and Excel-based systems haven't been established. Mostly, even if the systems are put into place, the bureaucracy needs to be regularly critical and measure the progress. But lack of technical capacity at the government level brings this order out-of-place.

National Budget

Predictability and transparency characterize Nepal's approach to development cooperation. Development cooperation is recorded on the national budget, ensuring that funding aligns with national priorities and is subject to parliamentary oversight. This practice enhances accountability and promotes informed decision-making in resource allocation. The national budget is shared in the parliament every fiscal year, upon which the plans and policies get affected. Until 2020-21 the Official Development Assistance (ODA) shares a significant proportion of the national budget. The Development Cooperation Report states that an average of 23% of the national budget is accumulated from the ODA. One of the major problems that Nepal is facing is the implementation of the budget.

Gender Budgeting

Nepal has made strides in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through dedicated systems for tracking and publicizing allocations for gender-related initiatives. SDG 5.c.1 serves as a guiding framework, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently to address gender disparities and promote inclusivity. The integration of Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Nepal has been instrumental in embedding gender considerations within macroeconomic policies and the national budgeting framework. This adoption has reinforced the government's accountability towards gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Through GRB initiatives, Nepal has witnessed significant social transformations. Notable advancements include increased women's land ownership, elevated participation of women across various sectors such as education, governance, and entrepreneurship. Policies facilitating these changes encompass reduced land registration fees for women, parliamentary and security force quotas, enhanced maternal health services, establishment of safe houses for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, provision of sanitary facilities in schools, and scholarships to promote female education. Over the past 15 years, direct GRB has escalated from 11.03% in 2007-08 to 40.25% in 2022-23. Concurrently, indirect GRB has shown an upward trajectory, peaking at over 48% of the total budget in 2016-17 and currently standing at 34.95%. Nepal's classification as "interactively responsive" suggests a positive alignment with GRB criteria, with allocations benefiting women directly or indirectly¹.

Nepal has also made notable progress in key areas, reflected in a rise from 58 points in 2015 to 64 in 2020 on gender equality metrics. These advancements span women's land rights, representation in parliament, access to sanitation, workplace equality legislation, and budget transparency. Continuing its commitment to women's welfare, GRB initiatives plan to enhance air rescue services for pregnant women and new mothers in rural areas. The introduction of 'women's cells' in high-traffic areas like bus parks and airports, sustained safe houses, and toll-free helplines for victims of gender-based violence are also in the pipeline.

However, despite these commendable efforts, challenges persist. Concerns arise from the predominance of informal employment, with 90.5% of Nepalese women engaged in the informal sector among a total employed population of 7.1 million. There is skepticism among gender and economic experts regarding the realization of GRB's objectives, questioning its effectiveness beyond theoretical frameworks.

Accountability Mechanisms

Inclusive, regular, and transparent accountability mechanisms are integral to Nepal's development policy framework. These mechanisms focus on results, fostering a culture of accountability among stakeholders and ensuring that development efforts yield tangible outcomes that benefit the populace.

Constitutional and Legal Instruments

The Nepalese Constitution enshrines the right to information as a fundamental right, affirming that every citizen has the right to demand or receive information on matters of public or personal interest (Article 27 - Right to Information). This constitutional provision is complemented by a range of legislative measures aimed at promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability.

Nepal's legal landscape is enriched with various laws such as the New Civil Code of 2020 and specific acts including:

- Anti-money Laundering Act 2070
- Good Governance Act 2064
- Right to Information Act 2064
- Public Procurement Act 2063
- Prevention of Corruption Act 2059
- Political Parties Act 2058
- Contract Act 2056
- Financial Procedures Act 2055
- Consumer Protection Act 2054
- Food Act 2052
- Civil Service Act 2049
- Press and Publication Act 2048
- Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority Act 2048
- Audit Act 2048
- Wealth Tax Act 2048

Institutional Arrangements

To enhance accountability, Nepal has instituted mechanisms such as:

- Citizen charter outlining service commitments and standards
- Provisions for public hearings and public audit to engage citizens in governance processes
- Complaint handling systems, including dedicated offices and the Prime Minister's Office with provisions for women's cases
- Appointment of Information Officers/Spokespersons to facilitate access to information
- Contract agreements to ensure transparency and adherence to stipulated terms and conditions.

Procedural Arrangements

The procedural arrangements further reinforce Nepal's commitment to accountability by providing structured processes for:

- Oversight and monitoring of governmental activities
- Implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations
- Evaluation and audit of public programs and initiatives
- Ensuring adherence to ethical standards and best practices.

Information Management

Robust information management systems for development cooperation are in place in Nepal. These systems serve as repositories for data and information related to development projects, facilitating informed decision-making and promoting transparency. Development partners are encouraged to report to these systems, ensuring alignment and coherence in information management practices. The information about the development partners reporting in the system is unknown as this mostly happens in the bureaucratic framework which isn't available to the public.

Procurement

Aid in Nepal is untied after its adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid, allowing for flexibility and adaptability in procurement practices. This approach promotes efficiency and effectiveness in utilizing development resources, ensuring that projects are implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner. The information about procurement isn't available at present.

3. Transparency

Transparency stands as a cornerstone in the architecture of effective development cooperation. It serves as a vital mechanism for accountability, trust-building, and informed decision-making. While Nepal has made commendable strides in this domain, there remains room for improvement and critical reflection.

Key Question

The key question that emerges is: What actions are partner countries and development partners taking to make development cooperation transparent?

Countries' Action

Nepal has taken steps to enhance transparency by making crucial information publicly available. This includes details on development cooperation, national development plans, and progress reports, which are instrumental in fostering an informed citizenry and promoting accountability. However, the accessibility and comprehensibility of this information to diverse stakeholders can be further improved. The challenge lies in ensuring that this data is not just available but also understandable and actionable for all segments of society. Results of joint assessments towards development cooperation targets are another area where Nepal can enhance transparency. Sharing these results publicly can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of development interventions, fostering a culture of learning and continuous improvement. Another significant area of concern is the access of these data. The data chunks that are gathered from the data collection process are usually made available but the processes have made it very difficult to attain these data.

Development Partners' Action

Development partners play a pivotal role in shaping the transparency landscape. Reporting to global systems and standards, such as OECD Common Reporting Standard, OECD FSS, and International Aid Transparency Initiative, is crucial for aligning with international best practices and ensuring coherence in reporting mechanisms. While many development partners have made strides in this direction, there is a need for greater consistency, timeliness, and comprehensiveness in reporting.

Making country-level strategies publicly available is another area where development partners can enhance transparency. This transparency can foster trust, facilitate collaboration, and enable better alignment of efforts between development partners and partner countries. The development partners follow a framework to internalize the development cooperation process in Nepal which is specified by the Ministry of Finance.

For partner countries like Nepal, the focus should be on enhancing the accessibility, comprehensibility, and relevance of information made publicly available. This includes leveraging digital platforms, engaging in outreach and awareness campaigns, and fostering a culture of transparency within government institutions. For development partners, the emphasis should be on aligning with global standards, enhancing the comprehensiveness of reporting, and fostering greater collaboration with partner countries in transparency efforts.

While Nepal has made significant strides in promoting transparency in development cooperation, there are areas that warrant critical reflection and improvement. Ensuring the quality, accessibility, and relevance of publicly available information, fostering greater alignment with global reporting standards, and enhancing collaboration between partner countries and development partners are key areas that require attention. Furthermore, transparency should not be seen merely as a compliance exercise but as a means to foster trust, accountability, and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in the development process.

While Nepal has laid a solid foundation in promoting transparency in development cooperation, there remains a need for continuous improvement, critical reflection, and collaborative efforts to enhance transparency further. As Nepal continues its development journey, transparency will remain a critical enabler in driving sustainable and inclusive development outcomes.

4. Leaving No One Behind

In the pursuit of sustainable and inclusive development, the principle of “Leaving No One Behind” stands as a guiding beacon. This principle underscores the importance of ensuring that development efforts are inclusive, equitable, and reach all segments of society, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Key Questions

The key questions that arise from this section are:

1. How is everyone consulted and targeted in development cooperation?
2. Is disaggregated data available to monitor progress?

For Nepal, the answers to these questions reflect its commitment to inclusivity, equity, and leaving no one behind. By actively engaging vulnerable and marginalized groups, integrating their priorities into development strategies, and utilizing disaggregated data for monitoring progress, Nepal demonstrates its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.

Consultation

Nepal recognizes the significance of engaging vulnerable and marginalized groups in shaping its national development strategies. This inclusivity ensures that the voices of these groups are heard, their needs are addressed, and their perspectives are integrated into the development discourse. By including them in dialogues on development priorities and joint assessments towards development cooperation targets, Nepal fosters a culture of inclusivity and empowerment. The National Planning Commission in 2022 prepared a national framework for Leaving No One Behind (LNOB). This has been done in coordination with the UNDP and European Union. The framework provides a guideline for inclusion with the composite of socioeconomic and governance indicators, also taking into account shocks and fragility². The LNOB framework specifies the outcomes of the results framework for monitoring. Outcome 1: Identification of excluded and marginalized groups; outcome 2: addressing policy gaps and operationalizing policies/instruments; outcome 3: making disaggregated data available supported by proper monitoring and evaluation systems; outcome 4: strengthen institutional mechanisms; and outcome 5: ensuring programme alignment. Despite the framework put into place, there has been no effective implementation of these ideas. Also, further updates on this regard aren't present after 2022.

Target and Results

In aligning with the principle of "Leaving No One Behind," Nepal's national development strategies and development partners' country-level strategies incorporate development priorities for vulnerable and marginalized groups. This proactive approach ensures that the unique challenges faced by these groups are addressed and that development efforts are tailored to meet their specific needs.

Furthermore, Nepal's national development strategies encompass disaggregated targets and results indicators, providing a nuanced understanding of progress across different segments of society. Development partners complement this approach by employing distributional analysis to define targets and results indicators for beneficiaries of interventions, ensuring that development efforts are targeted and impactful. Sometimes, data fraud and manipulation are also seen in order to meet the targets. It is important to keep in mind that progress and internalizing of data is also essential. Despite presenting great data, the changes at the ground level can't be seen much.

Data and Statistics

Data-driven decision-making forms the bedrock of Nepal's approach to inclusive development. Data-based assessments inform national development plans and development partners' country-level strategies, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions and areas requiring attention.

The major problem that we've been facing in development cooperation is the access to data. The national coordinator has to be the responsible person for data gathering and sharing, but no specific idea could be presented by the Ministry. The data to be disaggregated needs to be collected through a scientific approach. However, data is collected from a set of stakeholders without taking opinions from other experts. The culture of 'aafno-manchhe' seems to be prevalent in the collection of data.

The ministry specifies that continuous change in leadership at the coordinator level has brought a halt to the progress. The past coordinators too are answerable and thus the delivery of data to the public is put into question. Likewise, the framework for data collection has been established but it hasn't been regularly updated or put into place. Thus, the aim to decentralize data fails as the data can only be accessed through power and connection.

The ministry, despite abiding by transparency and accountability, hasn't been able to update data for proper monitoring at the GPEDC level. The stakeholder consultation with CSOs happened in April 2023 but the findings are very difficult to access. This also showcases that development effectiveness requires a proper system and order put into place. The coordinators should be able to properly disseminate data and should regularly monitor the progress.

Lessons and Challenges

The principle of country ownership emphasizes that developing nations should spearhead the design and execution of their development strategies. This contrasts with traditional methods, which are often donor-driven. This report delves into the key components and strategies to bolster country ownership for improved development outcomes.

1. Active People Participation

- Inclusive participation across wealth levels, gender, and backgrounds fosters a sense of ownership.
- Micro-assessments ensure programs cater to the needs of their target audience.

2. Infrastructure Development

- Investments in infrastructure lay the groundwork for economic growth.
- Improved infrastructure can boost income generation and enhance livelihoods.

3. *Governmental Transparency and Effectiveness*

- Governments must be transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizens.
- Effective governance facilitates successful implementation of development programs.

4. *Results-Oriented Approach*

- Prioritizing results ensures that development efforts align with the needs of the people.
- Country ownership promotes a focused approach to achieve tangible outcomes.

Challenges

1. *Digital Governance*

- The shift from traditional to digital governance is crucial for modernizing government functions.
- Traditional governance is often plagued by corruption, inefficient processes, and siloed operations.

2. *Stakeholder Engagement*

- Effective digital governance necessitates collaboration between government agencies, donors, and citizens.
- Fragmented IT systems hinder data sharing and collaborative efforts.

Benefits of Digital Governance

• **Transparency and Accountability**

Enhanced transparency builds trust between governments and citizens.

Accountability mechanisms ensure responsible governance.

• **Improved Service Delivery**

Digital platforms streamline service delivery, making it more efficient and accessible.

• **Citizen Participation**

Digital tools can engage citizens in governance processes, enhancing inclusivity.

• **Data-Driven Decision Making**

Data analytics inform decision-making, leading to more effective policies.

Conclusion

Throughout our discussions, the importance of country ownership in driving successful development outcomes has been underscored. This principle advocates for nations to take the helm in shaping and executing their development agenda, fostering a sense of ownership, commitment, and sustainability. Active participation of diverse stakeholders, from citizens to governments, enriches this ownership, ensuring that development strategies are inclusive and reflective of local needs.

Infrastructure development emerges as a cornerstone, laying the foundation for economic growth and improved livelihoods. Effective governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, remains pivotal in translating development aspirations into tangible results. Furthermore, a shift towards digital governance presents a transformative opportunity to modernize governance, enhance transparency, and foster citizen engagement. Challenges, such as corruption in traditional governance and fragmented IT systems, need to be addressed to fully harness the benefits of modern governance practices. However, with concerted efforts and collaborative approaches involving governments, donors, civil society, and citizens, these challenges can be overcome.

The 4th Monitoring Round of the GPEDC serves as a timely initiative to evaluate progress and reinforce commitments towards strengthening country ownership, improving development effectiveness, and ensuring inclusivity. Embracing a results-oriented approach, focusing on stakeholder engagement, and leveraging digital innovations, can pave the way for a more equitable, efficient, and sustainable development landscape. As we move forward, it is imperative to remain committed to these principles, working collaboratively to build a brighter future for all.

1 <https://nasc.org.np/file/6717/download?token=QX7sleti#:~:text=In%20the%20entire%20world%2C%20women39%20percent%20of%20all%20investments>.

2 <https://npc.gov.np/images/category/231120105645LNOB%20UPDATED%20REPORT-Sept%203%202023%20updated.pdf>

Annex 1: Charts from the workshop

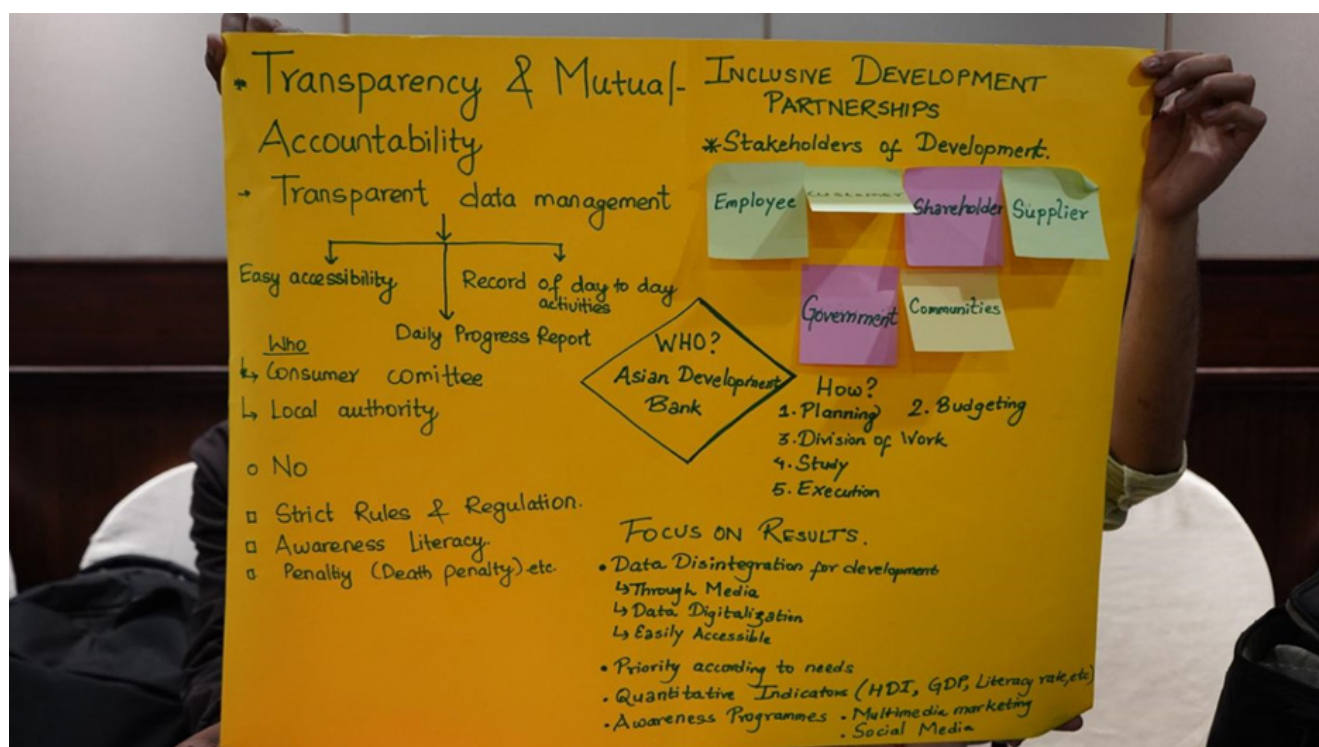


Figure 2: Group 1 data sharing

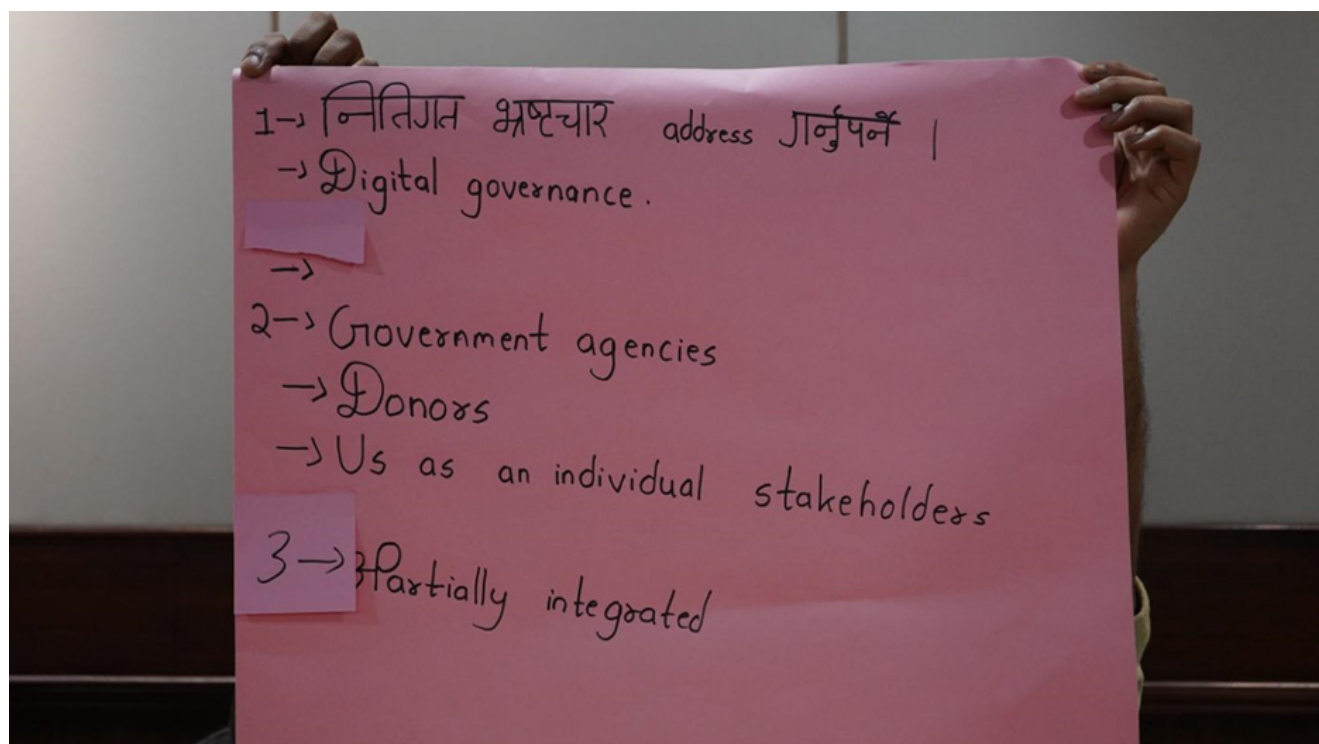


Figure 3: Group 2 data sharing

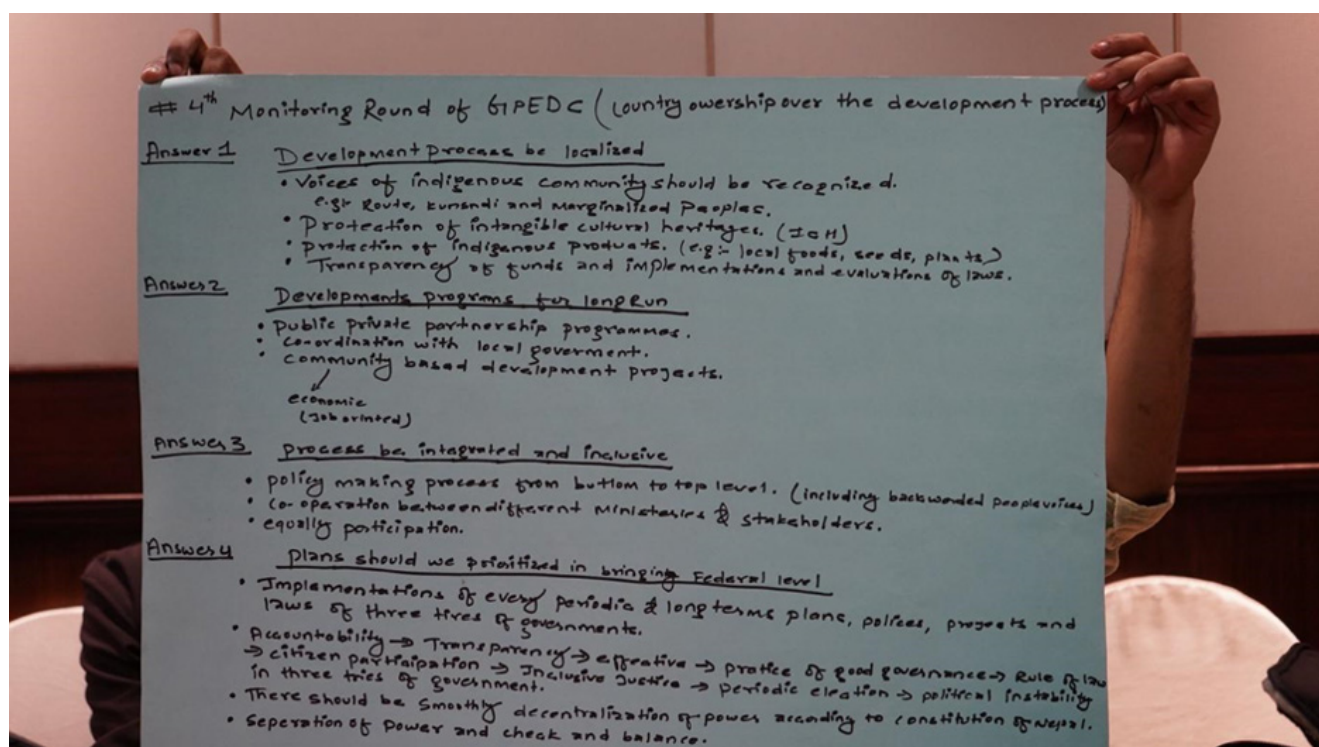


Figure 4: Group 3 data sharing

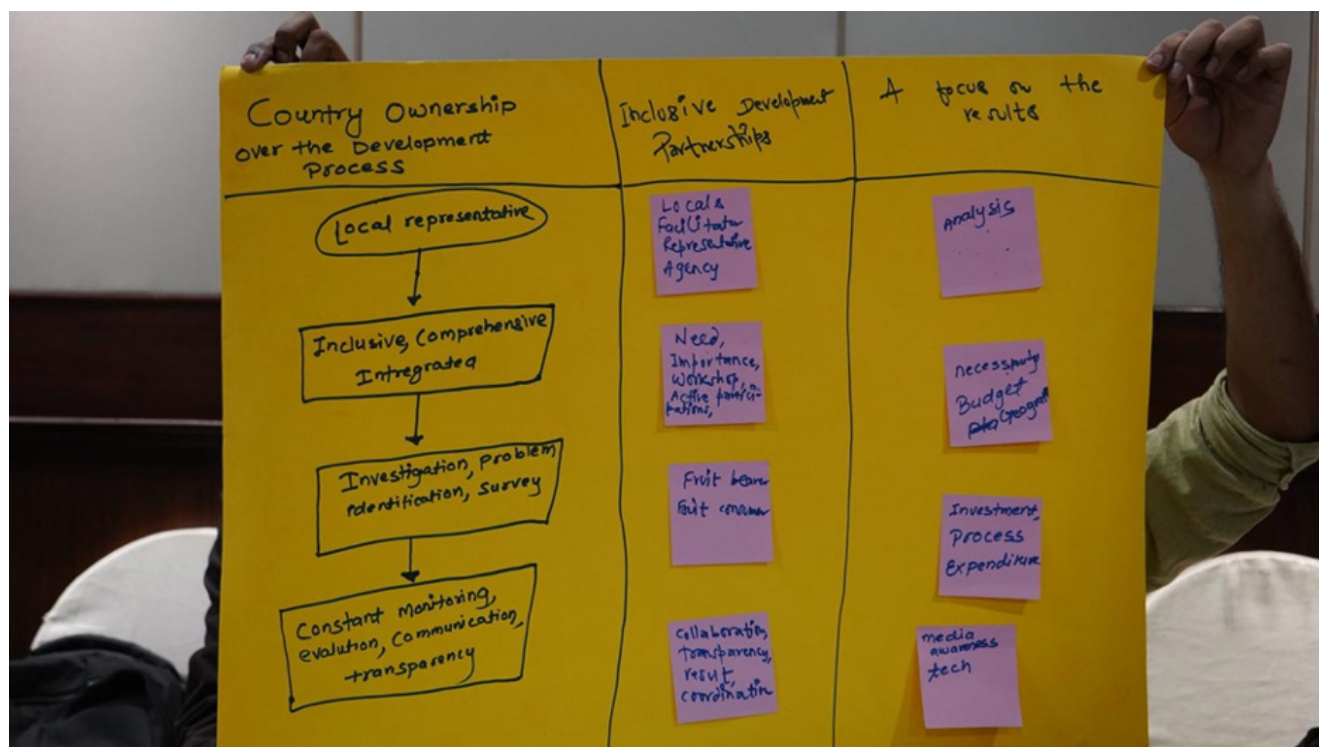


Figure 5: Group 3 data sharing



Figure 6: Group 5 data sharing

This Conclusion synthesizes the country reports in this collection and provides context to them. It has five segments: (1) Enabling Environment for CSOs (Partner Country Engagement, CSO Effectiveness, Development Partner (DP) Support, Legal and Regulatory Framework), (2) Private Sector Engagement (PSE), (3) Whole-of-Society: Engagement and Dialogue, and Parliamentary Oversight, (4) Three Dimensions: State and Use of Country Systems, Transparency, and Leaving No One Behind, and (5) Summary and Recommendations.

This structure of presentation departs from the format of the GPEDC's 4MR, a snapshot of which is presented in Table 1, and puts at the forefront the components – Enabling Environment for CSOs and Private Sector Engagement in Development Cooperation – which were the most consistently discussed across the country reports in this collection. Submitted by CSO focal points, these country reports can be seen as offering their most novel and substantial content on those topics. This format also fulfills the GPEDC's designation of reporting roles to CSOs, even as it recognizes and upholds CSOs' contributions to discussions of other dimensions of the 4MR Framework.

In segments (1) to (4), this Conclusion revisits the Busan Principles and other key documents of effective development cooperation. Then it presents the themes that emerge from a content analysis of the country reports. These themes are presented according to the number of country reports that support them and in relation to guidance for the 4MR Framework provided by the GPEDC and CPDE. Finally, it contextualizes the themes within global trends in development cooperation using reports that are widely considered credible – including publications of the CPDE and its CSO partners, the GPEDC and CPDE reports on the 3MR, global reports on democracy and civic space, among others.

The Summary and Recommendations, meanwhile, summarizes and synthesizes the main findings of each segment of this Conclusion. It then forwards recommendations based on a synthesis of the “Lessons and Challenges” and “Conclusions and Next Steps” sections of the country reports and includes insights that emerge, or are strengthened by, the first four segments of this Conclusion. The Recommendations section focuses on the dimension of enabling environment for CSOs, for the same reasons stated above. This Conclusion contents itself with amplifying CSOs' views on various dimensions and components of the 4MR reporting framework by synthesizing them in its segments (2) to (4).

This Conclusion shows that country reports in this collection provide evidence, of varying degrees of strength, that basic actions mandated by effective development cooperation principles, as embodied by the Busan Principles, enjoy buy-in by partner countries, DPs and CSOs. Measured against the entirety of the Busan Principles and the GPEDC 3MR report, however, significant challenges persist and hinder progress in the effective development cooperation agenda – which has implications for the sustainable development agenda itself.

I. Enabling Environment for Civil Society Organizations

The Busan Principles recognizes CSOs as independent development actors that play an important role “in enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships... in overseeing their implementation” and in providing “services in areas that are complementary to those provided by states” (Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness 2011, 6).

In line with this, the Busan Principles commit the GPEDC, which is composed of partner countries, DPs and development actors, to create an enabling environment for CSOs and generally enable CSOs to fulfill their role in development. These actions should be consistent with internationally adopted human rights standards and are seen as potentially resulting in the maximization of CSOs' contributions to development (Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness 2011, 6).

The Busan Principles cite the Siem Reap CSO Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness which discusses CSO enabling environment in detail. First, the Siem Reap CSO Consensus presents the basic human rights and freedoms that partner countries must respect, protect and fulfill to create an enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness. Second, it discusses measures that partner countries and DPs must carry out to attain said objective: (1) recognize CSOs as development actors in their own right, (2) structure policy and political dialogue for development in ways that are democratic and inclusive of CSOs, (3) uphold accountability and transparency with regard to development policies, and (4) create financing that is enabling for CSO development effectiveness (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011, 22-24).

For the 4MR, the component of enabling environment for CSOs is part of the dimension of whole-of-society and aims to capture the “political, financial, legal and policy context in which CSOs work” as well as how CSOs “organize themselves” to engage with governments and DPs in order to advance their development effectiveness. The global results of the 4MR on CSO enabling environment will be based on perceptions of partner countries, DPs and CSOs themselves – even as special weight will be given to CSO perceptions. CPDE, as the platform of CSOs for effective development cooperation, is expected to “consult widely” within its constituency to “provide representative views.” Complementary evidence will be gathered from governments (on inclusive dialogues), and CSOs (particularly with philanthropic organizations and trade unions) (GPEDC 2023a, 33).

It is worth noting that since the 3MR, the “DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance” was approved in 2021, motivated by concerns about CSO enabling environment: The first consideration, pertaining to partner countries, is the “diminishing respect for human rights and democracy in a context of rising autocratisation around the globe [that] is eroding the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression, posing a real threat to civic space.” The second, pertaining to DPs, is the need “to strengthen the way they support and engage with civil society actors to ensure the most effective use of the resources DAC members devote to their partnerships with these actors.” And the third pertains to CSOs, which face “opportunities to enhance their effectiveness, transparency and accountability” (OECD DAC 2021, 4).

The DAC Recommendations as such discuss three “pillars” for enabling civil society: “(1) respecting, protecting and promoting civic space; (2) supporting and engaging with civil society; and (3) incentivising CSO effectiveness, transparency and accountability” (OECD DAC 2021, 4, 6-10).

Country reports in this collection show that (1) while partner countries engage with CSOs in creating national development strategies, these engagements are beset with challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization, as well as lack of relevant information. (2) Majority of CSOs have adopted policies that are based on international standards and enhance their transparency and accountability, but due to lack of capacity, evidence about how these policies are translated into practice is weak.

(3) Except for including CSO enabling environment in their engagements with partner countries, there is little evidence that DPs worked to enhance CSO enabling environment. (4) Most countries have legal and regulatory frameworks that safeguard CSO enabling environment, but these face violations and problems in implementation.

These findings on CSO enabling environment suggest continuity with the findings of the CPDE 3MR report: (1) While partner country engagements with CSOs in creating national development strategies often exist, more than half of the countries surveyed said either there were no consultations, or consultations were occasional and had insufficient quality. An even higher number of countries said consultations about the SDGs were either non-existent or weak. (2) CSOs faced significant challenges in demonstrating their development effectiveness in equitable partnerships, transparency and accountability.

(3) DPs do not facilitate an enabling environment for CSOs, as partner countries and CSOs consistently ranked DP performance as considerably below good practice in the areas of CSO consultations, promoting CSO enabling environment, enabling modalities of financial support, and transparency at the provider-country level. (4) In a significant number of countries surveyed, CSOs faced difficult and disabling legal and regulatory issues while independent research showed CSOs in these countries to be subject to unreasonable government control (CPDE 2019, 14-16).

Partner Country Engagement

In all four foundational principles of effective development cooperation stated in the Busan Principles, CSOs and their engagement and effectiveness play important roles – in contributing to defining country development priorities; pursuing and providing information on results; engaging in partnerships; and promoting transparency and accountability. The role of partner countries in engaging CSOs is of crucial importance in upholding the Busan Principles and advancing effective development cooperation.

Country reports in this collection show that while partner countries engage with CSOs in creating national development strategies, these engagements face challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization. Challenges in institutionalization are also observed in CSO engagement by partner countries in general. All country reports state difficulties in acquiring relevant information for effective CSO engagement with partner countries.

- All country reports in this collection state partner country engagement with CSOs in national development planning. Majority of countries, however, report engagement with only some CSOs and through platforms that meet only occasionally (Bangladesh, Cameroon, Honduras, Indonesia, Philippines). Some countries do not mention inclusivity of attendance and frequency (Ghana, Nigeria). Only one country mentions progress in inclusivity of partner country engagement, but not institutionalization (Nepal).

- All country reports state difficulties in acquiring relevant information that would enable CSOs to effectively engage with partner countries – even as most countries have legal frameworks that guarantee the release of such information. Country reports describe the following situations: information disclosure varies according to government ministry and CSOs' relationship with those ministries (Bangladesh), release of information is not timely (Indonesia and Nigeria), lack of “usable” data that can be traced to lack of investment in data collection and mechanisms for data gathering and disclosure (Cameroon), non-release of audit reports, contracts and other pertinent information due to differing interpretations of the law by government ministries (Ghana), proposed law on freedom of information is not approved, only presidential order guarantees release of limited and outdated information, and is counterveiled by a law on data privacy (Philippines).
- Most country reports cite ad hoc, not institutionalized, CSO engagement by partner countries. They mention the following challenges: CSO engagement outcomes are not made available for CSO monitoring and follow-up (Ghana, Honduras), engagements are of mixed quality (Honduras), engagements are held without the content and format being agreed upon before the meetings (Indonesia, Philippines), CSO contributions are not seriously considered and integrated into plans and policies (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines), the government does not respond to CSO papers (Philippines). One country report recognizes the existence of institutionalized engagement but states that CSO invitation is selective and CSO contributions are not taken seriously (Philippines).

These findings show a continuity with the findings of the CPDE 3MR report, which included a bigger dataset of country reports. The report states that half of 44 3MR countries surveyed reported either not having any consultation or having only occasional consultations with below-sufficient quality, and that a bigger section reported not having consultations or having weak consultations for SDG prioritization, implementation and monitoring. The figures for CSOs that reported multi-stakeholder dialogues are even lower. Regarding disclosure of relevant and meaningful information, findings from the country reports indicate a worsening of the already dismal condition captured by the CPDE 3MR report, where less than half of the 3MR countries stated that access to relevant information is either non-existent or very poor (CPDE 2019, 13-14).

If these findings will be proven to constitute a continuation of the trends identified in the 3MR in 2018, these will also embody a continuation of the diagnosis of both the GPDEC and CPDE 3MR reports that inclusive partnerships garnered the lowest improvement since 2016 (CPDE 2019, 13).

As partner country engagement with CSOs can be seen as closely related to the nature of governments in the sliding scale of democracy and authoritarianism, democracy rankings are relevant to this discussion. Out of the eight countries which the country reports in this collection come from, four are included in the Top 50% of countries in the liberal democracy index of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Democracy Report 2024: Ghana, Nepal, Honduras and Indonesia (which is categorized as “autocratizing”). Four are included in the Bottom 50% of countries: Nigeria, the Philippines (also categorized as “autocratizing”), Cameroon and Bangladesh (V-Dem Institute 2024, 58-59).

While further studies are needed to connect the trends stated above with these democracy rankings, and while it can be expected that countries in the Bottom 50% have less partner country engagement with CSOs, it is worth noting that even two countries in the Top 50%, Honduras and Indonesia, also face these challenges. It is also worth noting that challenges in accessing relevant information for meaningful engagement in a timely manner cut across all countries, whether in the Top 50% or the Bottom 50% of the democracy rankings.

Trends depicted by the V-Dem Democracy Report are not encouraging in relation to partner country engagement with CSOs. According to V-Dem, since 2009, the share of the world’s population living in autocratizing countries has been bigger than that of those living in democratizing countries. At present, 60 countries are undergoing regime changes – 42 are undergoing autocratization while 18 are undergoing democratization. The first group covers 2.8 billion or 35% of the world population, while the second group covers 500 million, or 5% of the world population. V-Dem’s Participation Index, which includes civil society participation and covers citizen participation in general, also shows a decline starting in 2009 after a steady increase since the 1980s. Civil society is among those at the crosshairs of attacks in the world’s dive into autocratization, next to the media and elections (V-Dem Institute 2024, 9-18).

CSO Effectiveness

While the first action point in the CSO provision of the Busan Principles commits signatories to enhance the enabling environment for civil society, the second action point talks about encouraging civil society “to implement practices that strengthen their accountability and their contribution to development effectiveness” (Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness 2011, 6).

The Busan Principles cite the Istanbul CSO Development Effectiveness Principles, finalized in 2010, that describes the characteristics of CSOs as organizations and development actors: "voluntary, diverse, non-partisan, autonomous, non-violent, working and collaborating for change." The Istanbul Principles state eight principles to which CSOs commit as guide for their work: (1) human rights and social justice, (2) gender equality and equity and promotion of women and girls, (3) people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation, (4) environmental sustainability, (5) practicing transparency and accountability, (6) equitable partnerships and solidarity, (7) knowledge creation and sharing and mutual learning, and (8) positive sustainable change (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2010).

The Busan Principles also cite the Siem Reap CSO Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness (IFCDE), which provides (1) guidelines for the implementation of each of the Istanbul Principles, (2) strengthened mechanisms for CSO accountability, and (3) government policies and practices that provide critical conditions for CSO development effectiveness. Zeroing in on (2), the Siem Reap CSO Consensus recommends seven approaches to strengthening accountability mechanisms: (1) Using the Istanbul Principles and the IFCDE as foundations, (2) accountability by whom, to whom and for what must be clear in voluntary mechanisms, (3) stakeholders should be engaged with in the crafting of accountability mechanisms that are voluntary, self-regulatory, and context-specific, (4) stakeholders should have access to codes of conduct and accountability mechanisms, (5) flexibility and adaptability, (6) mechanisms should evince good practice, and not impose principles and results measurement, (7) existing mechanisms and lessons learned should be used (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011, 19-20).

Country reports in this collection show that the majority of CSOs have adopted policies that are based on international standards and that enhance their transparency and accountability. CSOs lack capacity, however, in translating these policies into practice, resulting in weak evidence of improvements in development effectiveness.

- Many country reports state that most CSOs have policies that are based on international standards and that enhance their transparency and accountability (Bangladesh, Honduras, Indonesia, Philippines). One country report says that CSOs are discussing ways to improve their transparency and accountability (Cameroon).
- With regard to the existence of national platforms for CSO effectiveness, country reports state the following: one platform (Bangladesh), multiple platforms (Indonesia, Philippines), and no platform (Cameroon, Honduras).
- Some country reports mention CSOs making important information, such as annual and audit reports, available through their websites (Bangladesh, Honduras, Indonesia).

- The country reports mention various issues, that indicate challenges or ways forward, with regard to CSO effectiveness: generating evidence of consistent use of policies mentioned above beyond the bigger CSOs (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines), institutionalizing policies including formalizing procedures and increasing capacity (Honduras, Philippines), improving coordination, accounts management and financial reporting (Cameroon).

These findings indicate a continuity with the findings of the CPDE 3MR report, which shows that “CSOs have faced significant challenges in demonstrating progress in their own development effectiveness in areas of equitable partnerships, accountability and transparency.” Both partner countries and CSOs evaluated CSOs’ performance in said areas as basic or weak. CSO respondents stated that their partnerships are often project-based and designed by financing CSOs (CPDE 2019, 16).

These findings also underscore the need and the urgency of efforts to boost CSO effectiveness, such as those contained in the latest CPDE effective development cooperation report for 2022. The CPDE shows that in 2022, CSOs held trainings and workshops among themselves and held multi-stakeholder dialogues to enhance CSO effectiveness and accountability. These activities instilled among the participants CSOs’ role in development and the need for CSOs to become development effective, and elicited pledges from CSOs in attendance to enhance their development effectiveness (CPDE 2023a, 115-117).

Development Partner Support

Through the Busan Principles, DPs are among the stakeholders that made the commitment to create an enabling environment for CSOs and to generally enable CSOs to fulfill their role as development actors (Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness 2011, 6). While the Istanbul Principles focuses on principles that CSOs should uphold, the Siem Reap CSO Consensus contains a short but weighty section on ideals for the relationship between CSOs and DPs.

Starting from the premise that “[t]he donor relationship is, by definition,... rooted in access to development finance for CSOs,” the IFCDE proceeds to define ideal “funding modalities undertaken by official donors.” These ideal modalities entail: “(1) a long-term results-oriented perspective, which includes core institutional support..., (2) responsiveness to CSO initiatives, (3) access for a diversity of CSOs, including support for different-sized CSOs, (4) predictable, transparent, easily understandable and harmonized terms, (5) the view to promoting the mobilization of local resources; and (6) support for the full range of CSO programming and innovation, including policy development and advocacy” (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011, 24).

For its part, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), the organization of countries that are the biggest providers of development cooperation, in its latest High-Level Meeting in 2023, affirmed its commitment to "co-create" development cooperation policies through "open, strategic and inclusive dialogue and partnerships" with CSOs and other development actors. In relation to civil society, the OECD DAC vowed to continue engaging with CSOs and taking actions to "protect civic space" (OECD DAC 2023).

The OECD DAC references the "Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance" which forwards the following crucial recommendation to DPs in relation to CSOs in partner countries: "increasing the availability and accessibility of direct, flexible, and predictable support including core and/or programme-based support, to enhance their financial independence, sustainability, and local ownership" (OECD DAC 2021, 8). While civil society has been engaged in monitoring the implementation of the OECD DAC Recommendation through the DAC-CSO Reference Group, the document itself states new normative principles for DPs, especially with regard to supporting CSOs (CPDE 2023c).

Country reports provide minimal evidence that DPs work to enhance CSO enabling environment in their engagement with CSOs, even as DPs include CSO enabling environment in their engagements with partner countries. Many country reports present critical comments pertaining to accessing DP financing and DP engagement with CSOs in general. DP financing is seen as driven by DP interests and DP country priorities, not country priorities as seen by CSOs.

- Some country reports comment on the inclusivity of CSO access to DP financing: seemingly "restricted" to certain CSOs (Indonesia), large and international CSOs "capturing" most of the funding while smaller CSOs act as subcontractors (Bangladesh), swift and non-stop changes in the funding landscape that makes it difficult for women's, community and new organizations to access funding (Nepal).
- Some country reports comment on the modalities of accessing DP financing: unpredictable (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines), irregular and short-term (Bangladesh), short-term with longer-term confined to humanitarian and emergency programs (Philippines).
- Many country reports present critical comments on the quality of DPs' relationships with CSOs: DPs always set the agenda for consultations (Philippines); "unbalanced dynamics" or "imbalance of power" operate, even as CSOs in some sectors have coordination mechanisms in relating to DPs (Honduras), defined by reporting requirements (Bangladesh), "a dependency of national CSOs on the funds and decisions of funders, limiting their autonomy and capacity for independent action" (Honduras), operating on a top-down approach (Nepal).

- With regard to DPs' timeframe of relationships with CSOs, one country report states the existence of "long-term programmatic partnerships" between DPs and CSOs (Honduras). Another country report claims such relationships exist only with a few CSOs (Bangladesh). Some countries enumerate characteristics that show short-term, one-off and project-based relationships (Bangladesh, Philippines).
- Country reports show mixed quality of DP consultations with CSOs: consultations are occasional and held with a select group of CSOs (Bangladesh, Indonesia); consultations depend on DPs, with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank holding "token" consultations while rights-based organizations such as the International Labour Organization holding meaningful ones (Philippines); and DPs hold sector-based consultations and invite CSOs to discuss country development plans (Honduras). Two country reports mention DP consultations with CSOs on development policies but the quality is not described (Nepal, Nigeria).
- Some country reports point out DPs' lack of transparency in engaging with CSOs beyond making available funding information on their websites (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines).
- Most country reports state that DPs' interests and DP country priorities drive funding, not partner country priorities or needs (Bangladesh, Cameroon, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Philippines).
- Many country reports state that DPs, upon CSO lobbying, include CSO enabling environment in their dialogues with country partners (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria, Philippines). One country report states that DPs have contributed to enhancing CSO enabling environment (Nepal).

Providing context to the financing issues stated above is a report of the OECD DAC that in 2020, USD 21.6 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) was provided to and through CSOs. This is equivalent to 16% of the computed real ODA for the year. USD 6 billion or 28% of the amount was provided to international CSOs, USD 14 billion or 65% was provided to CSOs based in donor countries, and USD 1.5 billion or 7%, the smallest section, was provided to developing country CSOs. International CSOs and CSOs based in donor countries were able to disburse an additional USD 48 billion from funds that were raised privately (quoted in Tomlinson 2024, 74).

The 2020 OECD DAC figures validate a trend that drives developing country CSOs to raise issues around power imbalance between them on the one hand and international CSOs and CSOs based in developed countries on the other. These also serve as context to the 2021 OECD DAC Recommendations about strengthening "the leadership of local civil society actors in partner countries" and, ultimately are related to developing country CSOs' demand that developed countries fulfill their development financing pledge of providing 0.7% of Gross National Income to ODA flows (Tomlinson 2024).

Findings from the country reports in this collection indicate continuity with the findings of the CPDE 3MR report – that most DPs are not facilitating a CSO enabling environment. Both CSOs and partner countries consistently ranked DPs' practices as below good, or being at a basic level or less than that – with regard to consulting with CSOs, promoting an enabling environment for CSOs, enhancing financial support modalities and enabling transparency in the level of the providing country. DPs, meanwhile, rank their practice at the level of moderately good (CPDE 2019, 15). This gap between the evaluations of CSOs and governments on the one hand, and of DPs on the other, points to the necessity of increasing dialogue and partnership, and taking action, on these issues.

The GPEDC 3MR report also states that CSOs do not consider DPs' funding mechanisms to be accessible, transparent and predictable, and view DP funding as motivated by DP interests and objectives, not country priorities as defined by partner countries or CSOs (GPEDC 2019a, 6).

Legal and Regulatory Framework

In its training for engagement with the 4MR, the CPDE states that legal and regulatory frameworks are the foundation of CSO enabling environment, without which other components will suffer (CPDE 2023b).

The Siem Reap CSO Consensus cites government laws and policies that hinder CSO activity – from overly broad and repressive anti-terrorism legislation, to restrictive financial and regulatory frameworks, to delayed release of travel visas. Against these laws and policies, it cites human rights and freedoms that governments need to respect, protect and fulfill in order to create a “robust and effective civil society” – from the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly to the right to freedom of mobility and travel, and the right to receive protection when under threat (Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness 2011, 22).

Most country reports mention the existence of legal and regulatory frameworks that guarantee an enabling environment for CSOs. Many, however, state that these frameworks face violations and implementation issues. Many reports from countries that are high in democracy and civic space rankings cite proposed legislation that can restrict CSO enabling environment, while many reports from countries that are low in these rankings but have vibrant civil societies cite existing repression of CSO enabling environment.

- Most country reports state the existence of legal and regulatory frameworks for an enabling environment for CSOs (Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Philippines), while one country comments on the improvement of these frameworks (Nepal). Some countries are quick to add, however, that these laws and regulatory frameworks are either being violated, particularly in the area of CSO registration (Bangladesh, Ghana, Philippines), or are in danger of being violated (Nepal) depending on the country's leadership. Only one country report states that legal and regulatory frameworks do not pose a challenge to CSO enabling environment, as basic freedoms are guaranteed, registration is "voluntary and moderately demanding," and CSOs working with vulnerable and marginalized groups enjoy protection (Indonesia).
- One country report talks about not having a legal framework for CSOs that focus on advocacy, even as the Constitution mandates civic engagement and broad consultation on development (Ghana).
- Some country reports cite heavy restrictions on the right to freedom of assembly, as well as severe punishments for violations of these restrictions (Bangladesh, Philippines). Two country reports say that while CSOs are generally allowed to exercise the right to freedom of assembly, some CSOs face discrimination by authorities when they exercise this right (Honduras, Indonesia).
- Two countries which rank low in the Varieties of Democracy or V-Dem report, and have a vibrant civil society, catalogue various government measures that are repressive towards CSOs (Bangladesh, Philippines). In these countries, various human rights violations are committed against CSO leaders and staff members (from harassment to arrests and killings) and CSO registration and operation are severely restricted, thereby constricting CSO enabling environment.
- Some country reports pinpoint proposed legislation that poses threats to CSO enabling environment and therefore to CSOs themselves: taxing CSOs and prohibiting them from selling properties (Nepal), making registration cumbersome, enabling political interference and limiting CSO engagement spaces (Ghana).

These findings indicate a persistence of the trends identified in the CPDE 3MR report, which states that 33% of the 54 countries surveyed face legal and regulatory issues that are "difficult and disabling, while 40% of the 70 participating countries, according to independent reports, have CSOs that are under unreasonable government control and face repression from moderate to severe levels. At the same time, 19% of 54 countries surveyed report governments imposing severe restrictions to accessing domestic and international finance, while other countries report varying levels of restrictions. Despite these evaluations, governments in these countries ranked their legal and regulatory frameworks on CSO enabling environment as moderate to good practices (CPDE 2019, 15). This gap between CSO and government evaluations calls for increased dialogue, partnership and collective effort.

The findings above also show a continuity with the findings of the GPEDC 3MR report, which state that legal and regulatory frameworks that provide protection to CSOs have declined, that freedom of expression is limited, and that work with marginalized communities is not adequately protected (GPEDC 2019a, 6).

Relevant to this discussion are global rankings of civic space. All eight countries covered by the reports in this collection do not have open civic spaces. Civic spaces in four countries even declined from 2018 to 2022: Bangladesh (repressed to closed), Ghana (narrowed to obstructed), Nigeria (obstructed to repressed), and the Philippines (obstructed to repressed). Meanwhile, civic space in four countries remained repressed or obstructed during the same period: Cameroon (repressed to repressed), Honduras (repressed to repressed), Indonesia (obstructed to obstructed), Nepal (obstructed to obstructed) (CIVICUS 2023, 58-62).

CIVICUS Monitor, which tracks the state of freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression in the world, points to an even possibly darker scenario. In its 2023 edition, which covers 2022, it states that 30.6% of the world's population who live in closed spaces is the highest since 2018, while the 2% of the world's population who live in open spaces is the lowest since 2018. It reports that 59% of the world's countries either have closed, repressed or obstructed civic space; while 22% have narrowed civic space; and only the remaining 19% have open civic space (CIVICUS 2023, 5). The top violations of civic freedoms range from disruption and repression of protests to intimidation, harassment, and censorship, and from attacks on journalists to the prosecution and detention of human rights defenders (CIVICUS 2023, 7).

The CPDE 3MR report shows that 33% of the 54 countries surveyed reported "serious discrimination, inconsistent legal protection and little juridical recourse for CSOs working with marginalized and vulnerable populations." FrontLine Defenders reports that 401 human rights defenders were killed in 26 countries in 2022, while 300 were killed in 28 countries in 2023. In 2022, the most reported violations according to frequency are: arbitrary arrest/detention, legal action, physical attack, death threat and surveillance. In 2023, death threats overtook surveillance, while surveillance overtook physical attacks (FrontLine Defenders 2022, 6; FrontLine Defenders 2023, 12).

A question about the 4MR Framework for CSO enabling environment, raised in CSO discussions in the Philippines report, is worth noting. The question can be summed up thus: How does the tool capture government actions or "attacks" against CSOs? Saying that partner country engagement with CSOs exist and that legal and regulatory frameworks for CSO enabling environment likewise exist may erase the fact that, despite these, some governments – especially at a time of what the Nepal country report calls "neoliberal populism" – indeed attack CSOs.

While these attacks are clearly out of place in the section on partner country engagement, they are most fitting in the section on legal and regulatory framework – with the immediate clarification that such location is about ascertaining that attacks indeed exist. Legal and regulatory frameworks themselves may suggest that the accountability for attacks are only for the courts to decide. But violations of legal and regulatory frameworks, once ascertained, can also be directed against governments who are supposed to implement these frameworks.

II. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The GPEDC's framework for PSE in development cooperation to address global challenges and achieve the 2030 Agenda is laid out in the "Kampala Principles on Effective Private Sector Engagement in Development Co-operation," which was finalized in 2019. The Kampala Principles aim to guide efforts to engage the private sector in development cooperation to deliver on development goals while recognizing the private sector's need for financial return. It defines the private sector as organizations that are engaged in profit-seeking activities and that have a majority private ownership (GPEDC 2019b).

The Kampala Principles contains five normative principles and 16 subprinciples. It largely echoes the four principles stated in the Busan Principles. It adds another principle, however: leave no one behind (GPEDC 2019b). For its part, the CPDE highlighted the need for PSE to uphold international labour and human rights standards; affirm the primary role of the government in providing social services and protection; and do away with development financing for privatization projects and businesses that undermine people's livelihoods and worsen inequality. It also emphasized the need to uphold communities' right to development and support small- and medium-sized enterprises (CPDE 2023a, 24-25).

For the 4MR, the GPEDC created a tool to enable partner countries, DPs, CSOs, trade unions and the private sector to evaluate the development effectiveness of PSE. It clarifies that the evaluation covers "projects and programmes in partner countries that involve international public resources for the private sector to deliver agreed development priorities" and aims to examine "good practices, challenges, and opportunities" (GPEDC 2023a, 1). The Kampala Principles assessment tool asks CSOs about the following, all in relation to PSE for development cooperation: experience in engaging with DPs, DPs' policies, quality of PSE, and ease of partnering with the private sector. It asks the same questions to trade unions and adds a question about partner country engagement with trade unions on the topic (GPEDC 2023a, 27-35).

The one country report that discussed PSE extensively and the minority of country reports that discussed PSE for development cooperation evince a lack of inclusive CSO engagement on PSE by partner countries and DPs. They show lack of inclusion of trade unions and CSOs in partner country engagements on PSE.

- The Indonesia country report found that most CSOs have engaged with the private sector, but not as co-founder of projects and programs. Most CSOs are aware of the national policy on PSE, but were not involved in its formulation. Less than half of the CSOs surveyed were involved in the national dialogue on PSE, and many of those involved reported limited efforts to address CSO concerns or incorporate these into follow-up actions. Majority of CSOs, meanwhile, are not aware of any government complaints mechanism on PSE, while those who are aware comment on the need to improve such mechanisms.
- While the majority of CSOs surveyed in Indonesia agreed that PSE has helped reduce risks for the private sector, only a minority believe that it served priority sectors, regions and groups in the country, and that it aligned with national and international standards on the environment, labour, and others.
- The Indonesia report also found, according to CSOs surveyed, that only a few DPs have engaged with CSOs for joint assessments of potential governance, social and environmental risks of PSE as part of due diligence. Less than half of CSOs surveyed reported having monitored PSE projects and programs and more than a third has made the monitoring results public. Only a few CSOs have knowledge of DPs that they have worked with having complaint mechanisms for PSE. A great majority of the CSOs say that based on their experience, it is easy for the private sector to access DP resources.
- The Nepal country report states that multi-stakeholder dialogues are held on PSE, even as it does not comment on the quality of these dialogues. It also mentions the government's engagement of the private sector for development, even as discussions between the two are not shared to the public.
- Other countries report about close government engagement with the private sector, but not with civil society. In one country, trade union federations are not similarly engaged, resulting in the government and the trade unions being "at loggerheads" on policy issues (Nigeria). In another country, representatives from the private sector often outnumber CSOs, and trade union groups are not being invited to engagements concerning their counterparts in the private sector (Philippines).
- Other countries comment on pressing concerns with the private sector in development: negative effects on local businesses by competition with foreign investors who receive government incentives (Ghana), lack of consultation with communities who are intended beneficiaries of corporate social responsibility and are affected by natural resource extraction projects (Ghana), and expensive public services that the government does not provide, thus contributing to distrust towards the government, especially among marginalized populations (Honduras).

While the CPDE 3MR report does not tackle CSO engagement on PSE, and as the Kampala Principles were formulated in 2019, the findings from the country reports in this collection connect with the document's findings about the challenges in inclusive partnerships in general and the least advanced in inclusive partnerships since 2016 (CPDE 2019, 12-13). It appears that the inclusion of the private sector in partnerships for development cooperation has carried with it the pre-existing challenges in CSO engagement.

The GPEDC 3MR report states, furthermore, in relation to what it calls “public-private dialogue,” that partner country governments, the private sector and other stakeholders agree that they have mutual trust and willingness to engage in policy dialogue. Despite this, all stakeholders agree that there is limited capacity to engage, and diverge in perceptions of the relevance and inclusiveness of said dialogue, which results in lowering the dialogue's quality. Despite this, the report posits, based on results, that when the basis for high-quality dialogue is already in place, public-private dialogue can bring about joint action and results (GPEDC 2019, 6).

At the same time, the current level of CSO engagement on PSE may be related to findings that OECD DAC countries, despite their efforts, have not been able to mobilize or catalyze private sector financing for development to the degree that they aspired to and anticipated. After an increase from 2015 to 2017, mobilized private finance for development has not increased since until 2021. Furthermore, most mobilized private sector financing has been concentrated on middle-income countries, contrary to the supposed trajectory of mobilizing for low-income countries (Tomlinson 2024, 90-93).

III. WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY: ENGAGEMENT AND DIALOGUE, PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

After discussing the components of CSO enabling environment and PSE, this section will discuss the remaining components of the whole-of-society dimension – namely engagement and dialogue and parliamentary oversight.

Whole-of-society pertains to the participation of all stakeholders in taking actions that contribute to sustainable development. The partner country government is recognized as the leader, which must engage with national and subnational governments, parliaments, civil society, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and trade unions. Engagement must be inclusive and equitable and bring out the different and complementary roles of the stakeholders in achieving sustainable development. The concept is traced to the GPEDC's 2nd High Level Meeting in Nairobi in 2016 (GPEDC 2023a, 31-32).

Engagement and dialogue measures inclusivity towards stakeholders in the entire national development strategy process – from planning and implementation to monitoring and accountability mechanisms. It pertains to how partner country governments and DPs engage with diverse stakeholders in formulating and implementing their national development strategies and country-level strategies, respectively. It also pertains to how governments engage with stakeholders on development priorities and results and on joint accountability assessments (GPEDC 2023a, 32).

Parliamentary oversight, meanwhile, measures how governments, together with DPs, provide information on development cooperation to parliaments and how parliaments exercise oversight of development cooperation such as in national budgets. Parliamentary oversight is a significant component of national oversight of development cooperation (GPEDC 2023, 33).

Country reports show that whole-of-society engagement by partner countries face challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization. (1) Partner countries, DPs and CSOs exhibit buy-in of engagement and dialogue and other basic actions mandated by effective development cooperation principles on CSO enabling environment, even as these engagements face persisting challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization. (2) Partner countries uphold parliamentary oversight of development cooperation.

(3) While legal and regulatory frameworks for CSO enabling environment are already present, partner governments, DPs and CSOs are still at basic stages of actions for creating such an environment, as regards enhancing CSO engagement and enabling environment for the first two, and improving development effectiveness for the third. (4) Partner country actions on PSE for development cooperation lack engagement with CSOs.

- Some country reports mention increasingly inclusive engagement and dialogue by partner countries and DPs with civil society and other development actors (Cameroon, Nepal, Nigeria). One country report says that engagement and dialogue are carried at the strategy planning stage (Nigeria). Another says that these are carried out all the way to the monitoring and assessment stages (Nepal). Yet another says that dialogues and engagements are becoming more dynamic (Cameroon).
- Many country reports, however, state limited development actor engagement by partner country and DPs: by-invitation only and conducted to endorse government plans (Bangladesh), the executive and the parliament not being receptive to advocacy and follow partisan positions (Ghana), discrimination and human rights violations against sections of civil society (Philippines). Selective engagement of CSOs is also reported in one country (Honduras).
- Many country reports describe the nature of parliamentary oversight over development cooperation: shared with a standing committee on finance when requested, and data is subject to parliamentary review (Bangladesh); parliament exercising strong oversight by law, even as hindered by partisan interests in practice (Ghana); only through parliamentary oversight can large-scale development cooperation enter the country, and it is effectively carried out (Nepal); a parliamentary oversight committee monitors development cooperation flows, and the implementation of development cooperation projects and programs (Philippines).

Except for the findings on parliamentary oversight of development cooperation, these findings indicate a continuity with those of the GPEDC 3MR report, which states that partner countries consult CSOs and other stakeholders in formulating national development plans, and DPs, to a lesser extent, consult CSOs and other stakeholders in formulating country-level strategies. At the same time, these consultations are not inclusive, regular and predictable. Civic space for civil society is shrinking and what was then called “public-private dialogue” or PSE is beset by stakeholders’ limited capacity to engage and differing perceptions of PSE’s relevance and inclusiveness (GPEDC 2019, 6).

The GPEDC 3MR report also states that development cooperation financing recorded in partner countries’ budgets and subjected to parliamentary oversight has fallen. This has meant that partner country governments’ capacity to plan ahead and budget for their development efforts has been reduced, together with accountability over national development efforts that is upheld through parliamentary oversight (GPEDC 2019a, 4).

Relevant to discussions of the whole-of-society dimension, and other dimensions that concern partner country government responsibility, is the state of democracy in the world. Government engagements with CSOs, the private sector and other development actors arguably shape, and are shaped by, trends in democratization or autocratization in the world. The V-Dem Democracy Report, for example, focuses on core principles of democracy, including liberal, consensual, participatory, deliberative and egalitarian, apart from electoral and majoritarian.

Drawing implications from the most recent V-Dem report for the whole-of-society dimension is not encouraging: the number of people in the world living in autocratizing countries has exceeded the number of people living in democratizing countries since 2009. This is most evident in Eastern Europe, South Asia and Central Asia, even as Latin America and the Caribbean buck the trend, seeing levels of democracy increase. All components of democracy are getting worse in more countries than they are improving, with freedom of association, clean elections, and freedom of association being the components that declined the most (V-Dem 2024).

IV. STATE AND USE OF COUNTRY SYSTEMS, TRANSPARENCY, LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Using country systems, according to the Busan Principles, is the “default approach” for development cooperation that is supporting public sector activities. It means respecting and working with governance structures of both partner countries and DPs and is seen as important to building effective institutions and national capacity for sustainable development (Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness 2011, 5). For the 4MR, it means “core public sector institutions and systems” that are important to governments’ effective and efficient management of resources for more effective development cooperation. In using these systems, development programs also increase efficiency and country ownership, reducing duplication of effort in expenditure and enhancing the benefits of development cooperation (GPEDC 2023a, 34).

Meanwhile, transparency, according to the Busan Principles, is the foundation for enhancing accountability among stakeholders and “citizens, organisations, constituents and shareholders.” Accountability is seen as crucial to delivering results, another effective development cooperation principle, while transparency is seen as built on trust (Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness 2011, 3). For the 4MR, sharing information to the public creates pressure to deliver results. Transparency is crucial to DPs, as it enhances coordination, encourages complementary actions, and helps avoid fragmentation and duplication. Here, information is specifically understood as related to development cooperation (GPEDC 2023a, 39).

The principle of leaving no one behind is nothing less than “the central, transformative promise” of the 2030 Agenda. It represents the “unequivocal commitment” of UN member-states, and partner countries in development cooperation, to “eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole” (UN Sustainable Development Group, n.d.) The 2nd High Level Meeting of the GPEDC in Nairobi in 2016 recognized leave no one behind as “the greatest challenge,” called for more and better data to ensure that no one, indeed, is being left behind, and emphasized gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as focusing on children and the youth “to achieve inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for present and future generations” (GPEDC 2023a, 41).

Among the country reports in this collection, Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria and the Philippines offered the more extensive details on these dimensions.

A significant number of country reports cite the presence and operation of country systems for development cooperation, even as only a minority of country reports state that these are functioning well. Only a few country reports mention partner country and DP efforts to make development cooperation more transparent, and they all comment about the need to make information more relevant and accessible. Only a small minority of country reports mentions partner country and DP engagement with CSOs that work with women and other marginalized populations. While many country reports mention the existence of disaggregated data and statistics, some mention the need to improve accessibility and relevance of these data.

State and use of country systems:

- Most country reports mention the existence of national development planning of various qualities (Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines). Some state that DPs use results frameworks and planning tools that are country-owned in making country-level strategies (Nepal, Nigeria). Some state DPs are pushing their agenda to the detriment of partner country development strategies (Ghana, Philippines).
- Many country reports say public financial systems exist (Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines). Some state that DPs use public financial systems to channel funds to the public sector (Ghana, Nepal). Some mention challenges in their public financial systems (Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria).
- Some country reports mention the existence of systems for tracking, and making public, allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment (Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal). One country report mentions great progress even as it also mentions challenges (Nepal) while another discusses challenges despite the existence of said systems (Ghana).
- One country report states the existence of accountability mechanisms that are inclusive, regular, transparent, results-focused and stated in a policy framework (Nepal), while another states the existence of such mechanisms even if it did not describe the quality (Bangladesh).
- Some country reports mention the existence of information management systems for development cooperation (Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal, Philippines).
- Only one country reported that aid is untied as the country adopted the Paris Declaration on Aid which allowed "flexibility and adaptability in procurement practices" (Nepal).

Transparency:

- Two country reports state that partner countries make publicly available information on development cooperation, national development plans and progress reports (Bangladesh), even as one mentioned the need to make information relevant and more accessible (Nepal). One country report states that the partner country is not making information on development cooperation publicly accessible (Ghana).
- One country report says that DPs make publicly available their country-level strategies (Ghana), while some country reports mention the need to enhance the accessibility and relevance of the information that is made public (Bangladesh, Nepal, Nigeria).

Leaving no one behind:

- One country report states that the partner country engages with representatives of women, children and other marginalized and vulnerable groups in creating national development strategies (Nepal). Two country reports say that governments do not engage with marginalized and vulnerable groups in creating national development strategy (Indonesia, Nigeria), even as one country report states that the government holds consultations with said groups on other issues (Nigeria). Another country report states that partner country consultations at various levels of governance do not particularly seek out said groups (Ghana). Yet another country report says the partner country does not engage with CSOs on these matters (Bangladesh). All these country reports do not comment on DP consultation with said groups in creating country-level strategies (Bangladesh, Ghana, Nepal, Nigeria) while one country report states that DPs do not consult with said groups (Indonesia).
- One country report says that the partner country's development strategy and DPs' country-level strategy contain development priorities for women and girls, youth and children, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, but these are not available to the public (Nepal). Two country reports state that only partner country governments have these (Ghana, Indonesia).
- Many country reports state that disaggregated data and statistics are available for monitoring progress on targets and results indicators for partner country development strategies (Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Nepal). In some countries, however, accessibility and relevance of available data and intentionality in collecting disaggregated data can be improved (Ghana, Nepal). Only one country report mentions the existence of data-based assessments informing both national development plans and DPs' country-level strategies (Nepal).

These findings indicate a continuity with those of the GPEDC's 3MR report, which states that while partner countries made "significant progress" in strengthening their national development planning, DPs' alignment with country priorities and country-owned results frameworks declined. Since 2011, the number of partner countries that have quality development planning has doubled, and almost all national development plans since 2015 cite the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. There is a need, however, to follow up improved planning with implementation resources and improved monitoring and evaluation. The decrease in DPs' alignment with country priorities and country-owned results framework stem mostly from bilateral DPs rather than multilateral development banks (GPEDC 2019a, 4).

The GPEDC's 3MR report states that the lack of available government data is a common problem between partner governments and DPs. Only one-third of partner governments reported having adequate data – in terms of national statistics and monitoring systems – to report on results frameworks, thereby reducing DPs' use of said frameworks (GPEDC 2019a, 4). Related to this, the GPEDC's 3MR report states that a small minority (19%) of partner countries have tracking systems that are comprehensive and in place and make public gender budget allocations. Majority, however, have only started taking action to create said systems and their basic elements (GPEDC 2019a, 3).

The GPEDC's 3MR report states that partner countries have improved their public financial management systems, particularly in crafting budgets, even as auditing and procurement, and responsiveness to gender equality goals, need improvement. DPs, however, have made minimal progress in using public financial management systems because of their use of procurement systems. Longer and stronger partnerships between partner countries and DPs are seen as increasing the chance of use of public financial management systems (GPEDC 2019a, 4).

With regard to transparency, almost all partner countries have information management systems for development cooperation, and most DPs report to these systems, even as consistency and quality of reporting at the country level remain as challenges. At the same time, mutual accountability mechanisms have become more inclusive. Partner countries that are more dependent on development cooperation have quality mutual accountability mechanisms, while countries that are less dependent are using "other, more holistic accountability structures." DPs report that mutual accountability assessments informed the way they work in a country (GPEDC 2019, 6).

V. CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, country reports in this collection provide evidence, of varying degrees of strength, that basic actions mandated by effective development cooperation principles, as embodied by the Busan Principles, enjoy buy-in by partner countries, DPs, and CSOs. Measured against the Busan Principles and the 2019 GPEDC 3MR report, however, significant challenges remain, hindering progress in the development cooperation agenda – which has implications for the sustainable development agenda as well.

Country reports in this collection all discussed the 4MR dimension of enabling environment for CSOs with varying levels of information. In this dimension, partner countries, DPs and CSOs exhibit buy-in of basic actions mandated by effective development cooperation principles on CSO enabling environment: in partner country engagement, CSO engagement by partner countries in development strategy planning; in CSO effectiveness, the adoption of policies based on international standards that enhance transparency and accountability; in DP support, raising CSO enabling environment in engagements with partner governments; and in legal and regulatory framework, the existence of policies and laws that guarantee CSO enabling environment.

All these components, however, face significant challenges with regard to the following: inclusivity and institutionalization and deficits in relevant information in partner country engagement with CSOs; lack of capacity and evidence of translation of policies into practice in CSO effectiveness; improvements in DP financing policies, engagement with CSOs, and respect for country priorities in DP support; and violations and implementation issues in legal and regulatory frameworks.

Country reports in this collection have, to different extents, discussed the 4MR components of PSE, engagement and dialogue and parliamentary oversight that form the dimension of whole-of-society; as well as the 4MR dimensions of state and use of country systems, transparency, and leave no one behind. Country reports show that partner country engagement with PSE lacks CSO engagement; partner country multi-stakeholder engagement and dialogue are limited; and parliamentary oversight of development cooperation is upheld by many partner countries.

With regard to the four 4MR dimensions, country reports in this collection show, with varying degrees of evidence as mentioned above, that (1) whole-of-society engagement by partner countries for development cooperation face challenges in inclusivity and institutionalization; (2) country systems for development cooperation exist and are operating even as only a minority of country reports state that these are functioning well; (3) transparency needs greater efforts by partner countries and DPs, especially with regard to relevance and accessibility of information; and (4) leaving no one behind needs improvements in accessibility and relevance of disaggregated data.

As the 4MR is a source of information in tracking progress in a few Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators, country reports in this collection suggest continuity with findings of the GPEDC 3MR report:

- **SDG Indicator 17.16.1:** a few partner countries engage in inclusive, transparent, and accountable multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- **SDG Indicator 17.15.1:** a few DPs using country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by aligning to partner country priorities.
- **SDG Indicator 5.c.1:** a few countries have comprehensive tracking systems in place and make gender budget allocations available publicly.

In this context, the 4MR should be taken by the GPEDC, CPDE and CSOs, partner governments, DPs, and other development actors as an opportunity to renew commitment to partnerships for effective development cooperation and to the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

This means, more concretely, reaffirming commitment to development effectiveness principles embodied in the Busan Principles, Istanbul Principles and other documents. Foremost among these are: developing countries' democratic ownership of development priorities, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability to each other. These are the core principles in delivering sustainable development projects and programs.

All stakeholders must take stock of progress, identify challenges – many of which have been persisting for years – and decisively identify and implement ways forward.

Particularly with CSO enabling environment, the focus and strength of this collection of country reports, the following recommendations are being forwarded:

All stakeholders:

- (1) Reaffirm and deepen the recognition of civil society as a development actor in its own right, distinct from partner country governments, DPs and other development actors.
- (2) Partner country governments, DPs and CSOs should work together and by themselves to move forward in creating and protecting an enabling environment for civil society.
- (3) Partner countries and DPs should operationalize provisions of the Siem Reap CSO Consensus and the OECD DAC Recommendations on Enabling Civil Society related to enhancing CSO enabling environment so that CSOs can fully uphold the Istanbul Principles.
- (4) Renew commitment to Official Development Assistance as a unique resource for leaving no one behind and development, as financing that is under public control and that should be used to reduce poverty and inequality in developing countries.
- (5) Push for the realization of OECD DAC countries' commitment to allotting 0.7% of Gross National Income to ODA and uphold development cooperation principles that should govern ODA.

Partner country governments:

- (1) Respect the right to freedom of expression and assembly, and do away with prominent violations of these such as internet censorship and repression, repression of protests, all the way to harassment and detention of human rights defenders.
- (2) Respect, protect and fulfill the right to freedom of association and remove repressive restrictions to CSO registration especially as these benefit narrow partisan interests and harm marginalized populations and communities that CSOs serve.
- (3) Create where none, and institutionalize where existing, platforms for engagement with CSOs. This means ensuring follow-through of engagements and dialogues, including monitoring and evaluation. Maximize digital means to strengthen engagements, inasmuch as these ways can contribute to substantive dialogue.

(4) Improve collection and disclosure of relevant and accessible information. This will improve CSO engagement and should result in the incorporation of valid CSO inputs into engagements and dialogues.

(5) Support CSO efforts to increase their capacity for policy engagement in relation to development cooperation and Agenda 2030. This should follow from the recognition of civil society as a development actor that is essential to advancing effective development cooperation and development itself.

(6) Deepen measures for gender equality and women's empowerment, and leaving no one behind in relation to children, youth, the elderly, people with disability, indigenous peoples, and other populations who face structural barriers to claiming their rights. Push on with gender budgeting, making such budgeting public and putting tracking systems in place. Engage with CSOs working with these populations.

Development partners:

(1) Review engagements with CSOs in developing countries and renew commitment to upholding inclusive and equitable engagements with said CSOs. Central to improving engagements is making available regular and predictable processes for providing financing for long-term partnerships.

(2) Implement the OECD-DAC recommendation on “increasing the availability and accessibility of direct, flexible, and predictable support including core and/or programme-based support, to enhance their financial independence, sustainability, and local ownership” in reference to developing country CSOs.

(3) Respect and align country-based strategies and priorities with country priorities as determined by partner countries and CSOs. DPs should create inclusive and institutionalized dialogues with CSOs, including follow-through to monitoring and evaluation.

(4) Support partner countries to create an enabling environment for CSOs based on CSO priorities, which may range from removing restrictive registration guidelines to ending rights violations against human rights defenders.

(5) In relation to CSOs in countries that face increasingly restrictive governments, provide financing to CSOs that carry out advocacy, provide long-term core support to CSOs facing repression, and put safety first.

Civil society organizations:

- (1)** Renew commitment to effective development cooperation and CSO development effectiveness as embodied by the Istanbul Principles and the Siem Reap CSO Consensus.
- (2)** Strengthen cooperation and collaboration with CSOs, and break down silos, to bolster CSO partnership for the 2030 Agenda, effective development cooperation and CSO effectiveness.
- (3)** Mobilize national CSO platforms and other alliances with CSOs to push for inclusive and equitable engagements with partner countries and DPs and forward recommendations to advance effective development cooperation.
- (4)** Increase capacity in evidence-based advocacy, policy formulation, strategic communication, among others, for policy engagements and dialogues for development and development cooperation.
- (5)** Increase transparency and accountability to marginalized communities and populations, to the public, and to each other. Periodically evaluate transparency and accountability mechanisms.
- (6)** Further increase capacity and partnerships for engagement in the 4MR process, as this is an opportunity to advance enabling environment for CSOs, effective development cooperation and the 2030 Agenda itself.

Regarding PSE:

- (1)** Continue to study the area and scope of PSE for development cooperation, in ways that can nuance which private sector actors, and which types of economic sectors and activities, can contribute to attaining the SDGs and support national development plans.
- (2)** Expand and deepen engagement on PSE including, apart from the private sector itself, civil society and other development actors. Increased efforts on PSE should mean increased engagement of all development actors, especially rights-holders, on the topic.
- (3)** Uphold CSO recommendations on PSE regarding international labour and human rights standards, government roles in providing social services and protection, communities' right to development, small- and medium-sized enterprises, and companies' background in relation to these.

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